

The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew

Volume II

TRANSLATED WITH INTRODUCTION
AND BRIEF ANNOTATIONS BY
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PART I

The *Vetus Interpretatio*
(On Matthew 16:13–22:33)

Book 12 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 16:13–17:9

9 'And when Jesus came into the regions of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying: Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist, and others Elijah, but others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He says to them: But who do you say I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'.¹

Christ asks his disciples 'who people say' he 'is' so that we might learn from the answers of the apostles the various opinions about Christ among the Jews at that time. And not only this, but also so that we who wish to be imitators of Christ might carefully examine what opinion people have of us. This is a great benefit for us. If something bad is said about us we may employ every means to remove the occasions for evil, but if something good is said we may multiply the occasions for it. But also, the disciples of the apostolic bishops are instructed by example to report to them whatever opinions of their bishops they hear in public. However, because of the diverse opinions of the Jews about Christ, consider why 'some' of them were saying that he was 'John the Baptist', in keeping, of course, with the appraisal of Herod who said to his servants: 'This is John the Baptist; he has arisen from the dead, and therefore powers are working in him.' 'Others, however said he was Elijah', supposing, of course, that Elijah either underwent a second birth or continued to live in the body from that time he appeared to this time. But those who thought him 'Jeremiah' thought that because of those words God spoke to Jeremiah at the very beginning: 'Behold I have appointed you today over nations and kings, to uproot, demolish, and destroy, and to rebuild and to plant about.'² They did not understand that Jeremiah was a type of Christ (and for this reason promises made to him were fulfilled in Christ); they thought Christ was Jeremiah whom God had appointed as a prophet among the nations. And those who thought he was 'one

¹ Mt 16:13–19.

² Jer 1:10.

of the prophets' were motivated by the similar thought that because those things which God, as it seemed, had spoken to the prophets themselves had, nevertheless, not been fulfilled in them.

The Jews held opinions of Christ that deserved indeed the veil that had been placed on their heart. But Peter, as if he were not a disciple of flesh and blood, but one who had been dignified with a revelation from God the Father³ denied that Jesus was any of those whom the Jews thought, and confessed, 'You are the Christ'. The Jews did not know this. And not only did he confess, 'You are the Christ', but he added what is greater, 'the Son of the living God', who also had said through the prophets, 'I live, says the Lord'.⁴ And perhaps, therefore, he was said to be living in relation to that preeminence by which he surpasses all who have life in themselves because 'he alone has immortality'⁵ and is the fountain of life. Now God the Father, who says through Jeremiah, 'They have forsaken Me the spring of living water', is properly said to be the fountain of life.⁶ 'He who said, I am the life, is life also as from the Father, the fountain of life.'⁷ And consider carefully whether, as the spring of the river is not the same thing as the river, the spring of life is not the same as life.

10 'Blessed are you Simon Bar Jonah because flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to you: You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it.'⁸

Perhaps if we also shall say what 'Peter said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', since flesh and blood do not reveal it to us, but the Father who is 'in heaven' illuminates our mind, we too will be Peter, and we will obtain the same blessing that he did because our confession resembles his. And when our citizenship is 'in heaven',⁹ and is worthy of a revelation from the heavenly Father, then 'flesh and blood does not reveal' to us that Jesus is the Christ, the son 'of the living God', but 'the Father who is in heaven.' Then the revelation of God has truly removed from us every 'veil' of the heart, and has given us the 'spirit of wisdom and of revelation'.¹⁰ But if we live according to flesh and blood, and at some other time we acknowledge that Jesus Christ is 'the Son of the living God', as for example, accepting a doctrine of this kind handed down to us by parents, then 'the Father' has not 'revealed' it to us, but 'flesh and blood'. We do not obtain a blessing like Peter because we are not unwavering in faith in him as Peter was. If, therefore, we too, confess that Jesus is the Son 'of the living God' when the Father reveals it to us (as we have said), we shall become Peter, and God the Word undoubtedly says to us, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church' and the following words, for everyone is a rock who is an imitator of Christ from whom those 'drank of the spiritual rock

³ See Mt 16:17.

⁸ Mt 16:17-18.

⁴ Jer 22:24.

⁹ See Phil 3:20.

⁵ 1 Tim 2:16.

¹⁰ See 2 Cor 3:15, 16; Eph 1:17.

⁶ Jer 2:13.

⁷ Jn 14:6.

that followed them.¹¹ And God's church is being built on every rock like this. For God's church, against which the gates of the underworld do not prevail, consists in individuals who have been made perfect, who contain in themselves an accumulation of words and deeds and all understanding, which produce a blessing of this kind.

11 But if you think God is building the whole church on that one Peter, what will you say of James and John, the sons 'of thunder',¹² or of the individual apostles? It was indeed, truly said to Peter, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it.' Nevertheless, it appears to have been said to all the apostles, and to all the faithful who are perfect, since they are all Peter and rocks, and Christ's 'church' has been built on all of them, and 'the gates of the underworld' do not prevail against any of those who are such. Nevertheless, let us consider what follows. Do you suppose that Christ gave 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' to Peter alone, and no other blessed person will receive them? But if the statement, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven', is a statement common among all, why is not everything announced to Peter above taken to be common to all? For in John, Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to his disciples by blowing into them and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven, and if you retain the sins of anyone, they are retained',¹³ as if all had been appointed in the same way as Peter had. For all who are imitators of Christ are likewise designated rocks, as Christ is, and from all such rocks, spiritual people drink the 'spiritual drink'.¹⁴ And just as in relation to the name of Christ, all who belong to him are said to be Christs (for the prophet says: 'That he might save his Christs'¹⁵) so, since Christ is said to be justice, all the just are justices, and wisdoms, in so far as Christ is wisdom.¹⁶ And so you will find in all the other names of Christ that it is correctly said to all: 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it.' To what does 'it' refer? 'Will they not prevail' against the rock on which Christ is building the 'church', or 'will they not prevail' against that church which he is building 'on the rock'. This is not expressed clearly. Nevertheless, it is clear that neither against that rock on which the church is built 'will the gates of the underworld prevail', nor against the church which is built on such a rock, as 'the way of a snake on a rock' cannot be discovered (as stated in Proverbs¹⁷). And that person against whom 'the gates of the underworld shall have prevailed' is to be said to be neither the rock on which Christ is building the church, nor the church which Christ is building 'on the rock', since either he who is a rock is inaccessible to the snake, or he who is truly the church is stronger than the gates 'of the underworld' that oppose him, because of Christ, the wise man who has built his church 'on a rock'.¹⁸

¹¹ 1 Cor 10:4.¹² See Mk 3:17.¹³ Jn 20:22.¹⁴ See 1 Cor 10:4.¹⁵ Hab 3:13.¹⁶ See 1 Cor 1:30.¹⁷ Prov 30:19.¹⁸ See Mt 7:24, 25.

12 For when we know that each and every sin by which one is brought down to the underworld is a gate 'of the underworld', we will understand that every soul that admits sin into itself is consequently, neither holy, nor is it a rock on which Christ is building 'the church'. Furthermore, it is not the church or a part of the church that Christ is building 'on a rock'. If anyone wants to contradict us on account of the large number of people of the church who appear to believe, it would be proper to respond by saying: 'Many are called, but few are chosen,' and again with that response the Lord gave to those who approached him, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for I say to you that many will seek to enter and will not be able,' and again, 'How narrow is the gate and afflicted the way which leads to life, and they are few who find it.'¹⁹ And when you look closely at the statement, 'Many will seek to enter and will not be able,' you will understand that this has been said of those who boast that they belong to the church but live negligently and not in accord with the precept of the Lord. Those who seek to enter, therefore, and are not able, are not able because 'the gates of the underworld' have prevailed against them. Those, however, against whom they have not prevailed will undoubtedly be able to enter because they can do 'all things' 'in Christ who strengthens' them.²⁰

And we ought to know that just as the individual gates of a city have their own names, so each 'gate of the underworld' has its proper name that accords with the nature of each sin. For example, one gate is called Fornication, through which all fornicators enter the inferno; another is called Denial of Christ, through which deniers of Christ descend into the underworld; a third is called Desire for Money, through which lovers of money who serve not God but mammon²¹ proceed. And in addition, each of the heretical authors who produced some knowledge with a false name has built a gate 'of the underworld'. Marcion and Basilides, indeed, built one, and Valentinus another. And in this way, individual fathers of the individual perverse doctrines have constructed certain gates 'of the underworld' as if they were architects of impiety, and many who follow the doctrines of their perversity enter through them. Although, then, the 'gates of the underworld' are many and innumerable, none of them will prevail against the person who is a rock or the church built on a rock. Nevertheless those 'gates' have some power, because they prevail against some who do not exert themselves against them or try to resist them; they are overcome by others, however, who do not withdraw from him who said, 'I am the door,'²² and consequently they have demolished every gate 'of the underworld' in their soul.

13 And not only here are sins called 'gates of the underworld', but also the prophet gives thanks to God who has lifted the lowly from the gates of death which stand below and says, 'You who lifted me from the gates of death, that I

¹⁹ Mt 22:14; Lk 13:24; Mt 7:14.

²¹ See Mt 6:24.

²⁰ See Phil 4:13.

²² See Jn 10:7.

might proclaim all your praises in the gates of daughter Zion'.²³ From this we learn that it is not possible that anyone proclaim all the praises of God unless indeed he has been lifted up 'from the gates of death' and come to all 'the gates of Zion'. Now the gates of Zion are to be understood as opposed to the gates of death. As riotous living is a gate of death, purity is a gate of Zion; injustice is a gate of death, but justice is a gate of Zion; as fear is a gate of death, courage is a gate of Zion, foolishness is a gate of death, but wisdom is a gate of Zion. Because of all these gates the prophet said, 'Open to me the gates of justice, that when I have entered them I may confess the Lord'.²⁴ Consider in addition, if you can, this statement also: 'Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood, but is against powers, against rulers of this world of darkness, against spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenly places'. Might each power and each ruler of this world, the world of darkness, and the individual spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenly places, perhaps be 'gates of the underworld' and gates of death, in opposition to which gates the many gates of justice are to be named in accordance with the angels of God who 'have been dispatched as spirits to minister for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation'.²⁵ For just as many gates are mentioned on the good side, but after the many there is one in relation to which it is said: 'Open to me the gates of justice, that when I have entered them I may confess the Lord: this is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter in it' (the Lord, therefore, is the single gate of the Lord), in the same way on the side of evil there are many 'gates of the underworld' and of death. There is each power, of course, against which we wrestle,²⁶ but over them all the evil one himself is the gate of death and 'of the underworld'. Since we know, therefore, the individual forms of the desires of the flesh by which we descend to death if we have sinned, let us beware of them so that we not sin, but being lifted up 'from the gates of death' we will proclaim 'all the praises of God in the gates of daughter Zion'.²⁷ For example, in one gate of daughter Zion, which is called purity, we will proclaim the praises of God in purity; and in another which is called justice, we will proclaim the praises of God in justice, and in general, in each and every thing in which we shall deserve praise, in those we can proclaim the praises of God. But in whatever we shall not have deserved praise, neither can we praise God. Therefore, we said above, if someone has not been in all the gates of Zion, he cannot proclaim the praises of God. But since we are speaking of gates, I do not think what the prophet said can be passed over: 'They hate the man who rebukes in the gates, and they have abhorred the holy word'.²⁸ Perhaps he who rebukes 'in the gates' is himself also one of those who stand in the gates of daughter Zion, rebuking those who stand in opposing gates, that is in sins, in the gates of death and 'of the underworld'; for no one can rebuke in a holy way if he himself does not stand in the gates of daughter

²³ Ps 9:14, 15.²⁴ Ps 117:19.²⁵ Heb 1:14.²⁶ Eph 6:12.²⁷ Ps 9:14, 15.²⁸ Amos 5:10.

Zion. But if you should not understand the prophetic word in this way, how is that saying found to be worthy of the prophetic spirit? Would it not have been sufficient to say: 'They hated the one rebuking' without the addition, 'in the gates'?

14 Next let us see in what way it is said to Peter, and to every faithful person who is Peter, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 16:19).

First, I think the Lord had said prior, 'On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it,' and consequently afterwards, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'²⁹ For the person who has blocked the gates 'of the underworld' so that they do not prevail against him is worthy to receive 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' from that same Word. For it is as if 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' are given in the second rank as a prize to the person who has been able, by his virtues, to block the gates 'of the underworld,' so that he, in himself, may open the gates of the kingdom of heaven that are closed to those who are conquered by the gates 'of the underworld.' And he who is indeed pure enters through some gate of purity, his purity itself opening it for him as a key. And the just person enters through the gate of justice which is opened by the key of justice, and so with each individual virtue. For every kind of virtue, when someone shall have begun to be serious about it, throws itself open, as it were, before the person who has approached it from the heart. It is the Lord, of course, who opens it by his grace for the person who has not been conquered by the gates 'of the underworld,' so that the virtue, the gate, and the key to the gate are found to be the same, and as many 'keys' are found as there are gates. But perhaps also each virtue is a kingdom of heaven, and all together are the kingdom of the heavens. In accordance with this, the person who lives virtuously is seen already to be in the kingdom 'of the heavens.' Perhaps that statement is made in relation to this understanding too: 'Do penance, the kingdom of the heavens has come near,' so that it should not be referred to time, but to the action and intention of each person, because it is said, 'The kingdom of the heavens has come near,' which is Christ, who is all virtue, who has come and spoken. For just as 'the kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say: Behold here, behold there,' but it is within the disciples of Christ, so too in respect to the kingdom of the heavens.

Now consider how much power the rock has on which Christ builds the church, and everyone who says, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,' so that even now his judgements remain firm, as if God is judging through him, if, moreover, 'the gates of the underworld' shall not have prevailed against him in that very thing which he judges. The 'gates of the underworld,' therefore, prevail against him who judges unjustly and neither binds 'on earth' in accordance with the Word of God, nor looses in accord with his will.

²⁹ Mt 16:18, 19.

That person, however, judges justly against whom the 'gates of the underworld' do not prevail, and because of this he has the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven' and opens for those who have been loosed 'on earth' so that they are loosed and free 'in heaven,' and he shuts to those who have been bound 'on earth' by his just judgement so that they are bound, as it were, 'in heaven' and judged. But since those who have laid claim to the position of bishop use this text as Peter, and, holding 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' which have been received from Christ, teach that those who have been bound by them have also been bound 'in heaven,' and those who have been loosed by them, that is have received forgiveness, have also been loosed 'in heaven,' it must be said that they speak well if they have those works on account of which it was said to that Peter, 'You are Peter,' and are such people that Christ builds his church on them, and if 'the gates of the underworld' do not prevail against them. Otherwise it is ridiculous that we should say that he who 'is bound by the ropes of his own sins' and 'draws his own sins as a long rope, and his iniquities as the strap of a heifer's yoke,'³⁰ has power of this kind just because he is said to be a bishop, so that sins he has loosed have been loosed 'in heaven,' or sins he has bound 'on earth' have been bound 'in heaven.' 'Therefore, let the bishop be irreproachable' who, whether he binds or looses, is worthy to bind or loose in heaven. 'Let him be the husband of one wife, sober, pure, honourable, hospitable, teachable, not a drunk, not violent, but forbearing, not contentious, not one who covets money, presiding well over his own house, having sons who are subject with all purity'.³¹ If he is such a person he will not bind unjustly on earth or loose without judgement. For this reason, whatever such a person shall have loosed 'on earth' will be loosed also in heaven, and what he shall have bound 'on earth, will be bound also in heaven.' For if someone shall not be Peter (as I thus describe), and shall not have possessed the things which are spoken of in this passage as if to Peter, and shall have supposed himself able to bind in such a way that they are bound 'in heaven,' and to loose, so that they are loosed 'in heaven,' he is deceiving himself, not understanding the will of Scripture, and 'puffed up,' he falls 'into the judgement of the devil'.³²

15 'Then he commanded his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Christ. After that Jesus began to show his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, and princes, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day to rise again'.³³

It is written above that 'Jesus sent these twelve saying to them, do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter the cities of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'³⁴ and what follows. He said this to them when he sent them to preach. Let us see, therefore, if when they do the works of the apostolic office, he wanted them also at this time to preach that he

³⁰ Prov 5:22; Is 5:18.

³¹ 1 Tim 3:2-4.

³² 1 Tim 3:6.

³³ Mt 16:21.

³⁴ Mt 10:5, 6.

was the Christ, and if he wished this, it is important to ask why it is that he now commands 'his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Christ'. But if he did not wish it, how are those things from the testimony which he commanded them to be preserved, such as: 'For they will deliver you to councils, and beat you in their synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings on account of me for testimony to them and to Gentiles', and this: 'When they hand you over, do not be concerned about how or what you shall say, for what you shall say will be given to you in that hour' and the following words down to, 'You will not complete the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes.'³⁵ I do not know how these words can be understood if they did not confess Jesus to be the Christ. In the same way also, what sort of confession in Christ is indicated by the words, 'Everyone who shall have confessed me before men,'³⁶ unless someone dares to say that he did not want it to be preached at that time that Jesus himself is the Christ. But he said these things so that one not refer the interpretation of this passage to a future time after the disciples of Jesus had been called Christians, since that name begins from Antioch.³⁷

One must also ask on this passage whether they knew at the time they were sent that he was the Christ. And if they knew at that time, there is no doubt that Peter also knew. How, then, does Jesus ask them after so many things, 'But who do you say that I am?' When he said to Peter, who responds and says, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven,'³⁸ for by these words the Word shows that at that time Peter confessed him to be the Christ, the Son 'of the living God' for the first time.

And see if you can provide a solution to this kind of question by saying that to believe Jesus to be the Christ is less than to know it. And that it is less is made clear from what John relates, 'Therefore Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in him, If you remain in my word, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.'³⁹ Consequently, we may say, When they were sent to preach they believed indeed that Jesus was the Christ but, nevertheless, they did not as yet know it. Later, however, profiting from teaching and numerous miracles, they also knew it, and when they were asked, they confessed, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. Or, if the apostles are thought to have known Jesus to be the Christ even at that time, it must thus be said that there are differences in knowing. For example, who being wise does not understand that although Timothy knew that Jesus was the Christ he was not as enlightened in his knowledge as Paul? Moreover, who does not also know that even if many make true statements when they speak of God, because 'He himself gave me true knowledge of those things that exist,'⁴⁰ nevertheless, all do not know

³⁵ Mt 10:17, 18, 19, 23.

³⁶ Mt 10:32.

³⁷ See Acts 11:26. Perhaps this statement (beginning with 'he said these things') is not a statement of Origen about what Jesus said, but a statement of the Latin translator about what Origen has said.

³⁸ Mt 16:15-17.

³⁹ Jn 8:31, 32.

⁴⁰ Wis 7:17.

those things that they know with a similar clarity or perfection. Consequently, we may say that at that time the apostles did indeed have an initial knowledge of Christ and knew minute things about him, but later they had advanced in knowledge of him so they could receive the knowledge of Christ revealed by the Father himself, as Peter, to whom he also said, 'Blessed are you, Simon, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven.'⁴¹ And he is pronounced blessed not only because he said, 'You are the Christ', but even more because he adds, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. Mark and Luke, however, have written that Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ', and have not added 'the Son of the living God', which is written in Matthew. For this reason, they have not recorded the blessing related to Peter's confession nor after the blessing the praise which says, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church' and the following words.⁴²

16 Otherwise we must treat it as follows: It was not that they were teaching at that time that Jesus was the Christ and now he has commanded them to tell no one, but rather that they were at that time proclaiming insignificant things about him, such as the fact that he was a great and astonishing man, but they were not yet proclaiming that he was the Christ. It was as if they were advancing certain modest facts about him as an introduction for the Jews, so that when they had been prepared in a moderate way for faith in him, it might also be added that he is the Christ. Or, a possible solution to the question might be that we should say that many things which Christ said to the apostles at that time did not pertain so much to the apostles as to all believers in Christ. For the following statement is not applicable only to the apostles: 'You will stand before governors and kings because of me for a testimony to them and the Gentiles', or the statement: 'But brother will deliver brother to death and father son, and sons will rise against their parents and put them to death', and in addition, this: 'Everyone who shall have confessed me before men', and other statements have been made not to the apostles alone, but to all who believe.⁴³ According to this, therefore, it must be said that the teaching that had been done had been dispatched in advance for the apostles. Afterwards it was to be fulfilled so that what Christ said above about the proclamation of Christ appears not to pertain to the time preceding the resurrection of Christ, but to a later future time. These things that he commands that they tell no one, however, are appropriate for the apostles at that time.

17 And further, the person who wants Christ himself to have been preached previously by the apostles will say that he wanted them to put forth mention of his name delicately, so that, after an intervening period of silence of preaching of this nature, this very thing that had been heard about Christ delicately, might be considered in a mature way in the understandings of the hearers. In this way Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead might be introduced

⁴¹ Mt 16:17.⁴² See Mt 16:17, 18.⁴³ Mt 10:18, 21, 32.

more advantageously to them. However, at first not even the apostles themselves knew, as the present sentence testifies when it says, 'After that, he began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and princes and scribes, and be killed and on the third day arise.' And if, at that time, the apostles were learning about these things from Jesus that he was to suffer, why must we think that those who were taught about Christ earlier by the apostles had known, for even if Christ was proclaimed to them, he was proclaimed in an introductory fashion and not with clarity. Therefore, when the Saviour sent the apostles, he wanted them 'to tell no one' clearly 'that he was the Christ'. This was, of course so that they might withhold the more complete teaching about him for later when they could opportunely announce his resurrection from the dead to those who had seen him crucified. For if the apostles, who were always with him and saw 'all the miracles that he performed' and gave testimony to his words that they were 'words of eternal life',⁴⁴ stumbled the night he was betrayed, what do you suppose those would have suffered who first heard, if they had heard that he was the Christ? For this reason, he is sparing them when he commands the apostles 'that they tell no one that he is the Christ'. This was like what Paul did when, to those Athenians who were still constituted by the rudiments, he proclaimed not Christ the Son of God, but a certain man in this manner: 'Therefore, God, disregarding the times of ignorance, now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has established a day to judge the world equitably by a man whom he has appointed, to demonstrate to all that he is faithful by raising him from the dead'.⁴⁵

18 The person, therefore, who wants these words to the apostles at that time to pertain to times yet future, and does not want the apostles yet at that time to have proclaimed that he was the Christ give a reason like this: He indeed wanted the name of Jesus to be preached in the meantime, but he wanted the fact that he was the Christ, and crucified, to be preached at an opportune time after the passion and resurrection when what was being said could also be confirmed from the actual events. Knowing this, the apostle said to the Corinthians, 'For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified'.⁴⁶ Therefore, they first preached Jesus as doing such and such and preaching this and that. But now, after Peter has confessed him to be the Christ, the Son 'of the living God',⁴⁷ he commands them 'not to tell anyone that he is the Christ', as if he does not want them to preach this for a while. He gives as the reason that he does not want himself to be proclaimed to be the Christ for a while 'that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things'. If anyone, therefore, is ashamed of the cross of Christ, he is ashamed of the dispensation by which the principalities and powers which were subduing humanity were triumphed over in the cross. He ought rather to boast as one who believes

⁴⁴ See Mt 21:15; Lk 4:22; Jn 6:68.

⁴⁶ 1 Cor 2:2.

⁴⁷ See Mt 16:16.

⁴⁵ Acts 17:30, 31.

and knows that these powers have been controlled in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified,⁴⁸ and the principalities, including, I think, the ruler of this world, have been handed over and triumphed over for those alone who believe. Therefore, when he drew near to the passion he said, 'Now is the ruler of this world judged: now is the ruler of this world cast out.' In relation to this expulsion he said, 'If I shall be lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to me.'⁴⁹ Now, of course, the mighty ruler who used to prevent those who were being drawn to Christ from coming to him does not have so much power as previously.

19 It is a necessary thing, therefore,⁵⁰ that Christ Jesus be preached as crucified;⁵¹ and it is worthless to preach him but to be silent about his cross. It does not seem so worthless to me for a person to say that Jesus is the Christ, but to be silent about his birth from a virgin, or about the star that pointed out his birth, or the angels at his birth who praise God and say, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will', or about the other miracles or signs that he performed, as for someone to say that he is the Christ, but conceal the fact that he was crucified.⁵² Because, therefore, he wished that it be preached more completely a little later, 'he commanded that', meanwhile, 'they tell no one that he is the Christ'. He was preparing them that a little later they might say that he is the Christ who has been crucified and raised from the dead. And notice carefully that it did not say that 'thereafter he began' to say or to teach 'that he must go to Jerusalem', but it says: 'Thereafter he began to show his disciples'. Whereas just as physical things are said to be shown, so the things Christ says are said to be shown. And I do not think that those who saw him suffering 'many things' physically were shown those things that they saw as clearly as the spiritual word he showed 'the disciples' about the mystery of his passion and resurrection.

20 And at that time 'he began to show', but subsequently he showed them more fully to those with greater ability. He no longer showed them beginning with the rudiments, as it were, but progressing in the showing itself. And if it is reasonable to understand that Jesus completed whatever he began, at some time or other he most certainly completed what he began 'to show the disciples, that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer'. For whenever anyone shall have closely followed the complete knowledge from the word about those mysteries, and his understanding sees the things shown from an intellectual showing, then it must be said that the showing has been completed. Since 'it is not possible that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem'⁵³ it speaks of that perishing of which it is said elsewhere, 'He who shall lose his life because of me will

⁴⁸ See Gal 6:14.

⁴⁹ Jn 16:11; 12:31-2.

⁵⁰ Klostermann inserts *praedicando* (for preaching) here, which was suggested by Diehl. I have opted to omit it, as the sentence is clear and makes the same point without it.

⁵¹ See 1 Cor 2:2.

⁵² See Mt 1:23; 2:2; Lk 2:14.

⁵³ Lk 13:33.

find it'.⁵⁴ This is why it was necessary for him 'to go to Jerusalem', so that 'when he had suffered many things' in Jerusalem and been killed in it he might produce the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead in that Jerusalem 'which is above',⁵⁵ abandoning, destroying, and abolishing the Jerusalem that had been on earth along with all its worship. For so long as 'Christ had' not 'been raised' neither had his disciples been raised with him, and they continued to look below for the city of God and the temple that was in it, with its altar and priests and Levites, and the gifts and sacrifices for sins, and the purifications. But as soon as 'Christ arose, the first fruits of those who sleep', those also who had been conformed to his death and resurrection arose with him.⁵⁶ Thereafter those who arose with him no longer look below for Jerusalem, or the house of prayer in it, or the altar, or worship, or worshippers, but above. Since they are those who have arisen with and sit with Christ in the heavenly places,⁵⁷ they will see those things which were on earth destroyed, but they will see the things that are in heaven in brilliance. It was to institute these events that he had 'to go to the Jerusalem', which was below 'and suffer many things' there 'from' its 'elders and chief' priests 'and scribes' so that he might be glorified by those who accept his benefactions, namely the heavenly 'elders' and the more divine 'chief' priests and 'scribes of the people', who devote themselves to documents not written with ink, but explained 'by the Spirit of the living God'.⁵⁸ He had to go so that he might be killed in the Jerusalem which is below, but rising, he might reign in 'Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem', Zion, of which it is said in the second Psalm: 'But I have been appointed king by Him on Zion, his holy mountain, proclaiming the ordinance of the Lord'.⁵⁹ But on the 'third day' he arose from the dead, so that, snatched from the evil one and from his son, in whom was lying, injustice, war, and all things contrary to the things that characterize Christ, and further also from the unclean spirit which transforms itself into a holy spirit,⁶⁰ he might procure for those who will have been liberated, the gift that they might be baptized in spirit, soul, and body 'in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit', who are three days, constantly present simultaneously with those whom they have made sons of light.⁶¹

21 'And Peter takes Jesus and begins to rebuke him: May he be propitious to you, Lord, and this will not happen to you. He replied, Get behind me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me, for you are not thinking of the things of God, but those of men'.⁶²

Since Jesus had begun 'to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things', so far teaching the initial points of those matters which were being shown, Peter thought these things were inappropriate for the Son

⁵⁴ Mt 10:39.⁵⁵ See Gal 4:26.⁵⁶ See 1 Cor 15:20; Rom 6:5.⁵⁷ See Eph 2:6.⁵⁸ See 2 Cor 3:3.⁵⁹ Ps 2:6, 7.⁶⁰ See 2 Cor 11:14.⁶¹ See 1 Thess 5:23; Mt 28:19; Jn 12:36.⁶² Mt 16:22-3.

'of the living God'⁶³ and inappropriate for God the Father who had revealed this to him (for as yet it had not been revealed to him that the Son of God must suffer and so special and so great a Christ be killed). Therefore, 'he takes him' and as if he were unaware of the dignity of Christ, since the 'Son of the living God' says or does nothing deserving rebuke, 'he began to rebuke him' and, as if he has need of propitiation, to say: 'May he be propitious to you, Lord'. For Peter did not yet know that 'God put' this man 'forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood.'⁶⁴ Christ, accepting his affection but reproaching his ignorance, said to him, 'Get behind me', as if speaking to one who is desisting from going behind Christ out of ignorance and, because of those things which he did not express correctly. And he said 'Satan', which in Hebrew means 'Contrary', as if addressing one holding something contrary to God. But if he had not spoken out of ignorance, and had not rebuked the Son 'of the living God' saying, 'May he be propitious to you, Lord, and this will not happen to you', he would never have said to him, 'Get behind me', as if to one desisting from going behind him and following him. And if Peter had not said things contrary to those that he had said, he would not have said to him, 'Satan'. But now Satan had prevailed in him, so that he was ceasing to go behind him and follow him. What he had said in ignorance made him deserve hearing 'Satan' and 'a stumbling block' for the Son of God and, 'You are not thinking of the things of God, but those of men'. But the fact that Peter had been behind the Son of God before he sinned is clear because at the beginning of their calling it was said to them: 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men; and having left everything, they followed him.'⁶⁵

22 But at the same time, consider the difference in language, since he said to Peter, 'Go behind me, Satan', but when the devil says to him, 'I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me', he replies, 'Go, Satan', without adding, 'behind me'.⁶⁶ For it is a good thing to be 'behind' Jesus. For this reason, he speaks as follows according to Mark: 'He saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, and said to them, Come behind me, and I will make you fishers of men.'⁶⁷ His statement, 'If anyone does not take up his cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me', is the same kind of statement.⁶⁸ And (to speak briefly) consider that wherever the phrase 'behind me' appears, it is said in a good sense. For it is good when anyone goes 'behind' the Lord, but it is the opposite when someone casts the words of the Lord behind himself, or when one transgresses that command, 'Do not go after your own desires.'⁶⁹ Elijah says the same thing to the people in the third book of the Kings: 'How long will you limp with both your feet? If the Lord is God, go after him; but if Baal is Lord,

⁶³ See Mt 16:16.

⁶⁴ Rom 3:25.

⁶⁵ See Mt 4:19, 20; 19:27.

⁶⁶ Mt 4:9, 10.

⁶⁷ Mk 1:16, 17; Mt 4:19.

⁶⁸ Mt 10:38.

⁶⁹ Sir 18:30. The same Latin word, 'post', appears in all these quotations, but it cannot always be translated 'behind' in English.

go after him.⁷⁰ Now we have said these things because of what was said to the devil: 'Go, Satan,' and not, 'Go behind me, Satan,' but to Peter: 'Go behind me, Satan.' And Jesus says this to Peter when he 'has turned' to him; for this too is beneficial for him, and blessed is the person to whom Christ is turned, even if he is turned to reproach as he had turned to Peter. And you will be able to gather numerous examples of this kind in which the word 'turned' appears, and you will discover in general that it appears to the advantage of those to whom Jesus is turned. But it is sufficient at present that I cite that prophetic word that says, 'Turn somewhat, Lord,' likewise, 'He turned and looked back at Peter,' where by his turning, Peter was enlightened and recognized his sin and wept bitterly. In the same way, it says in John, 'And his two disciples heard and followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, What do you seek? And they said to him, Master, Where are you staying?''⁷¹

23 And I ask further why he said 'to Peter, you are a stumbling block for me,' especially when the prophet proclaims in the one hundred eighteenth Psalm, 'There is much peace for those who love your law, and there is no stumbling block for them.'⁷² For someone will say, Since it is characteristic of those who have perfect love for God that they are never made to stumble (for 'love suffers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; love never fails'⁷³), how, then, does the Lord himself, who strengthens all who are weak and raises up all who have been dashed to the ground, say 'to Peter: you are a stumbling block for me'? But this person is to be answered in this way, that not only is Jesus not made to stumble, neither is any person who has been perfected in the love of God; but as far as he himself is concerned, the person who does or says anything like this is a stumbling block to the other, although the other may be impervious to stumbling. Or, certainly Jesus calls every disciple who sins a stumbling block for himself, just as also Paul says of disciples of this kind, 'Who is made weak, and I am not made weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with anger?''⁷⁴ If, then, Peter is called a 'stumbling block' by Christ (for the fact alone that he said, 'May he be propitious to you, and this will not happen to you'), as though he were one who does not think on 'the things of God,' but 'those of man,' what is to be said of all those who profess to be disciples of Christ but neither think on 'the things of God' nor look to those eternal things that are not seen, but think on and look to the things of man which are seen and are temporal?⁷⁵ Without doubt, people like this are to be called stumbling blocks for Christ to a much greater extent. But also, the person who leads his brother to a stumbling stone is a 'stumbling stone' for Christ according to what he himself says, 'I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat,' and what follows.⁷⁶ Therefore, just as he who gives food to his brother gives food to Christ, so also, he who has become a 'stumbling block' for his

⁷⁰ 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 18:21.

⁷³ 1 Cor 13:7, 8.

⁷¹ See Ps 6:5; Lk 22:61, 62; Jn 1:38.

⁷⁴ 2 Cor 11:29.

⁷⁵ See 2 Cor 4:18.

⁷² Ps 118:165.

⁷⁶ Mt 25:42.

brother has become a 'stumbling block' for Christ. It is, therefore, not a trivial error to think on the things of men, since one ought to think on what is of God in all things. And this statement, 'You are a stumbling block for me, because you do not think on the things that are of God, but those of men', is to be said not only to those who sin in their manner of life, but also to all who have fallen from the teachings of God and from all discourse of the church and from all wisdom of the truth and think on (for example) the things of Basilides, or Valentinus, or Marcion, or of anyone of those who teach human doctrines as if they were divine.

24 'Then Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.'⁷⁷

Since we said above that to go after Christ is a great good, let us compare, therefore, the words corresponding to this passage from all the evangelists. Mark puts it this way, 'And calling together the people with his disciples, he said to them: If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.' Luke has it as follows: 'He said to all, If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'⁷⁸ We recognize clearly, therefore, by all these sayings that 'to go after' Christ and 'to follow' him does not result from just any virtuous actions, and no one can 'go after' Christ unless 'he has denied himself'. The person who leaves behind his previous wicked life in a laudable conversion denies himself. For example, an immoderate person denies his immoderate self whenever he has turned to purity, and one who is unjust denies his unjust self when he has begun to serve justice. So also, one who was foolish at one time denies his foolish self when he accepts the wisdom of God, and the cowardly denies his cowardly self when he has been made strong in the power of God. It is also said to be this way in relation to every kind of sinfulness. The person who turns away from those things in accordance with Jesus' command denies himself what he was. But it must be investigated consequently whether just as someone denies himself, in the same way he also confesses himself, denying himself, on the one hand, as an unjust person, but confessing himself on the other to be just. But if Christ is justice, the person who accepts justice does not confess himself, but Christ. So also, the person who finds wisdom, by the very fact that he acts wisely confesses Christ. For also the person who 'believes with the heart unto justice and with the mouth confesses unto salvation' and offers testimony to Christ with works and words will deserve that Christ confess him 'before the Father' of all things, as if he were one who by all these things has confessed Christ 'before men.'⁷⁹ And on the contrary, just as the person who does not deny himself confesses himself but denies Christ, the person who will have denied Christ will, of course, also be denied by Christ.⁸⁰ Therefore, may our

⁷⁷ Mt 16:24.

⁷⁸ Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23.

⁷⁹ See Rom 10:10; Mt 10:32.

⁸⁰ See Mt 10:33.

every thought, understanding, word, and action show our denial, and our testimony to and confession of Christ. For I believe that all the acts of a perfect person are a testimony to Christ, and the abstinence from all sins to be a denial of the person that brings him 'behind' Christ. And such a person has been firmly joined to Christ and carries 'his own cross' and follows him who, because of us, carried his own cross according to what is written in John: 'They took Jesus, therefore, and led him forth, and placed the cross on him and, carrying his own cross, he went out to the place that is called Calvary.'⁸¹

25 And further, on his command, 'Let him deny himself', there seems to me to be a helpful example of Paul denying 'himself' and saying, 'And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'⁸² For his statement, 'I no longer live' is the utterance of one denying himself, who has put aside, as it were, his own life, but has received Christ into himself so that he might live in him as justice, wisdom, sanctification, our peace, and as the power of God which works all these things in him.⁸³ And take note of this also, that although there are many means of death, the Son of God was crucified, suspended 'on a tree', and consequently, all who die to sin die to it in no other way than that related to the cross, so that they can say, 'I have been crucified with Christ',⁸⁴ and likewise, 'And God forbid that I boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.'⁸⁵ Although, therefore, someone may abstain from sin and be dead so far as sin goes, nevertheless, unless this person shall have believed in the cross of Christ and have abstained from sin because of faith in him who was crucified, this person cannot say, 'But I have been crucified with Christ'. Perhaps also each of those crucified with Christ has 'stripped himself of principalities and powers and has led them and triumphed over them on the tree', or rather Christ does all these things in him.⁸⁶

26 'For he who wishes to save his life shall lose it, and he who shall have lost his life because of me will find it. And what does a man profit if he should gain the entire world and lose his own life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?'⁸⁷

We can understand this saying in two ways. First, in this way: If someone is a lover of his present life and supposes that this present life is the optimum, he is careful not to harm his life, fearing death and supposing that his life perishes by this death. Such a person who wishes in this way 'to save his life will lose it', since he is alienating it from eternal life. But if someone, despising the present life because of the word of Christ and, being confident of eternal life, shall have fought for the truth to the point of death, 'he will' indeed 'lose his life' (so far as the present life is concerned) delivering it to what is improperly called death for the sake of godliness. This person shall have lost 'his life' for the sake of Christ or rather,

⁸¹ See Jn 19:16, 17.

⁸² Gal 2:20.

⁸³ See 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 2:14; 1 Cor 1:24.

⁸⁴ See Gal 3:13; Rom 6:2; Gal 2:19.

⁸⁵ Gal 6:14.

⁸⁶ Col 2:15.

⁸⁷ Mt 16:25-6.

shall have saved it in eternal life. But we understand this text in another way as follows: If anyone understands what true salvation is, and wishes to acquire it as the salvation of his soul, that person, renouncing this life and denying himself and 'taking up his cross and' following Christ, loses 'his life' so far as fleshly desires, for the sake of Christ and all his teaching, and losing 'his life' in this way, he saves 'it' by works of godliness. For as if returning to a previous reason he thus adds, 'For he who shall have wished to save his life will lose it'. By saying, 'For he who shall have wished', he shows that the preceding and the following are one idea. If, therefore, what he said previously, 'Let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me', he said of death alone, we ought, consequently, understand the statement, 'He who shall have wished to save his life will lose it', to have been said of death alone. But if to deny and take up the cross means not only to die for Christ but to cast off the way of life of the flesh, without doubt also to lose one's life means not only to die, but also to put aside the desires of the flesh.

27 And at the same time, consider that in the beginning he does not say, 'He who' shall have saved 'his life will lose it', but, 'He who shall wish to save his life will lose it', but in what follows he does not say, 'And he who' shall wish to lose 'his life for my sake, will save it', but he says, 'He who shall lose his life for my sake will save it'. Therefore, if we wish to save our life let us lose it to this world, as if crucified with Christ and having our boasting 'in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to us and we to the world', so that we may pursue the salvation of our souls in the pursuit of a better life. And so (in accordance with those things that we have said) this appears to me to be like that which he said, 'Let him deny himself and take up his cross'. For he who denies 'himself and' takes up 'his cross', is the person who loses 'his life' for the sake of Christ, and losing it, rather 'saves it', and he who loses his life so far as desires of the flesh are concerned is the person who denies himself and takes up the 'cross' and follows Christ. 'And what does a man profit if he gains the entire world but suffers the loss of his own life'? In my opinion, he who does not deny himself or take up his cross and follow Christ (per what we have said) or lose his life so far as the desires of the flesh are concerned, so that he might save it in spiritual pursuits gains the world. The world is not crucified to this person in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁸⁸ and the person to whom the world is not crucified suffers the loss of his own life. Two choices have been set before us: If we wish to gain the world we must lose our lives or, if we wish to gain our lives, we must lose the world. It is preferable to choose to lose the world and gain our lives because we lose them for the sake of Christ.

28 'Or what will a man give as an exchange for his life'?⁸⁹

At first appearance, property is an exchange for a life, so that a man might give his property to the poor and save his life.⁹⁰ But I think that a human being

⁸⁸ See Gal 6:14.

⁸⁹ Mt 16:26.

⁹⁰ See 1 Cor 13:3.

does not have anything that he might give as an exchange for his life which is held in the grip of death, that he might free it from death's hand. A human being, therefore, cannot give anything as an exchange for his life, but God has given the precious blood of his Son as an exchange for all our lives, for we were not purchased 'with corruptible silver or gold, but with the precious blood of an undefiled lamb'.⁹¹

29 For the Son of Man will come in the majesty of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to each one according to his works.⁹²

Now, indeed, 'the Son of Man' has come, but not 'in his glory'; 'for we saw him, and he had neither form nor beauty, but his form was without honour and contemptible compared with the sons of men; a man, since he was wounded and in anguish and acquainted with weakness, and despised, and considered to be good for nothing because his face was turned away'.⁹³ He truly had to come as such so that he might bear our sins and suffer for us.⁹⁴ For it was not proper that he bear 'our sins' or suffer 'for us' when he was established 'in glory'. But he will also come in his glory once he has prepared his disciples by his advent that had no form or beauty,⁹⁵ having been made like them that he might make them like himself, 'conformed to the image' of his glory, because previously he had himself been made like 'the body of our lowliness', when he 'emptied himself taking the form of a slave', that he might restore it to the form of God.⁹⁶

30 But if you are able to understand the differences of the Word in a moral way, that he is announced in the foolishness of preaching to those who believe, and is spoken of as wisdom 'among the perfect', you will perceive how the Word of God has the form 'of a slave' to those who are newly introduced to faith, so that they say, 'We saw him and he did not have form or beauty', but to the perfect he comes 'in the glory of his Father' so that they say, 'And we saw his glory, the glory as of the only one from the Father, full of grace and truth'.⁹⁷ For to the perfect the glory of the Word appears and the fact that he is the only one from the Father, and that he is 'full of grace and at the same time of truth'. The person who needs the foolishness of preaching to believe is not capable of grasping this. 'The Son of Man will' certainly 'come' not only 'in the majesty of his Father' but 'with his angels'. And if you can understand all the co-workers in the glory of the Word which is shown in wisdom (which is Christ), coming with him, you will perceive how 'the Son of Man' comes 'in the majesty of his Father with his angels'. For his angels are the words of the prophets. And see if you can say that the words of the prophets who previously suffered before the advent of that Word were despised for not having 'form or beauty' in a way corresponding to that Word who does not have 'form or beauty'. And just as

⁹¹ See 1 Cor 7:23; 1 Pt 1:18, 19.

⁹² Mt 16:27.

⁹³ Is 53:2-3.

⁹⁴ See Is 53:4.

⁹⁵ See Is 53:2.

⁹⁶ See Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21; 2:7.

⁹⁷ See 1 Cor 1:21; 2:6; Is 53:2; Jn 1:14.

'the Son of Man' comes 'in the glory of his Father', so the words of the prophets, made angels, come with him in majesty in a way resembling the coming of the Word in majesty, because it was not possible previously to understand the words of the prophets spiritually with respect to the truth, except when the word of Christ had been understood spiritually so that they might be seen to appear simultaneously in majesty. And when such a Word shall have come with his angels to the understanding of a believer, he will give each one a share of his glory and of the brilliance of his angels in accordance with each one's action, because when someone is better in his actions, he understands Christ or his prophets so much more spiritually. When will those things appear? When that apostolic saying shall be fulfilled which says, 'For we all must stand before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive the proper things of the body in accordance with what he has done, whether good or evil'.⁹⁸ But if it is to be given back to each one in accordance with his action, he will give back neither for good actions alone without evil ones, nor for evil ones alone without good ones, but each one will receive in accordance with every good action and in accordance with every evil one. But, believing the apostle in those words but Ezekiel in these, I think that the sins of him who completely repents are blotted out; preceding uprightness is not credited to them.⁹⁹ But we who are midway between the perfect and the apostates are repaid 'before the tribunal of Christ' in accordance with what we have done, 'whether good or evil', because we have not so fully turned back to God that no evil actions are charged to us at all, nor have we so turned away that God is unaware whether we have, in some way, done good works.

31 'Truly I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. [And six days later]'.¹⁰⁰

Some understand that these three apostles did not taste 'death' before they saw 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory'. For when they see Jesus transfigured 'before them' so that 'his face' shines 'as the sun and his clothing' glistens 'like light', they have seen 'the kingdom of God coming in power'. As certain armed men might stand around the emperor, so 'Moses and Elijah are seen' around Christ, 'appearing in majesty' to those who ascended the high mountain. They were speaking with Jesus and 'were discussing his departure which was to be accomplished in Jerusalem'. This explanation is suitable for those who are like those Peter describes as having become 'as newborn infants, desiring milk that is rational and without deception'.¹⁰¹ Paul also spoke to these saying, 'I gave you milk as drink, not meat, for you were not yet able, but neither are you able now'.¹⁰² I think every explanation which is given according to the letter of the text and can edify those who are incapable of a

⁹⁸ 2 Cor 5:10.

⁹⁹ See Ez 18:21, 22, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Mt 16:28.

¹⁰¹ 1 Pet 2:2.

¹⁰² 1 Cor 3:2.

stronger explanation is properly called milk because it flows from the holy ground of the Scriptures.¹⁰³ But the person who has been weaned, as Isaac, and deserves the rejoicing and entertainment which Abraham made at the weaning of his son,¹⁰⁴ undoubtedly seeks stronger food in these words and in every Scripture. This food, which is other than that food which is food indeed, but not strong food, is called vegetables. Vegetables are food for the weaned person indeed, but they are for the weak, not the strong. In relation to this the apostle said, 'But he who is weak eats vegetables'.¹⁰⁵ So too Samuel was weaned and transferred to God by his mother, and offered to God by his mother¹⁰⁶ (whose name was Anna which, in Hebrew means 'grace'), and if anyone should be a son of grace reared in the temple of God, as it were, he should seek meat, the holy food of the perfect and, at the same time, of the priests.

32 Those are the thoughts that occur to me on the present passage. There were some standing where Jesus was standing, and the bases of their soul were established with Jesus. These, therefore, were standing with Jesus, that is with the Word of God, but not all were standing equally. For there are also differences of standing between individuals who stand with Jesus. This is the reason not all who were standing with Jesus, but 'some' of them, as if there were those who were standing better, are said not to taste 'death until they see' the Word of God that comes to men. And, therefore, that Word is reported 'to come in his kingdom' as 'Son of Man' because the Word does not always 'come in his kingdom' when he comes. For to those who are first introduced to the faith he is such that they say they see him neither as glorious nor great, but inferior to many human words: 'We saw him, and he did not have form or beauty, but his form was without honour and despicable before the sons of men'.¹⁰⁷ Those who see his glory will say such things about their former times when at first the Word did not seem to them to have a glorious form as they understood him at their origin. Therefore, beyond that ordinary and obvious understanding which they had at their origin when they were coming to the faith, there is some understanding that is more worthy and royal, as it were, in the Word, which not all who stand with Jesus see, but only those who are able to follow him when he leads the way and ascends the high mountain of his manifestation. These are like Peter, whom we described above, or the sons of thunder, who are born from the lofty speech of God who thunders and calls out distinguished words from heaven to those who have ears and are wise. Those, therefore, who are like Peter or like James and John, the sons of thunder, will 'not' taste 'death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory' and 'the kingdom of God coming in power'.¹⁰⁸ But let us expound more clearly what it is to see the Word 'coming in his kingdom and in his glory' and what it means to see 'the kingdom of God coming in power': Does it mean it

¹⁰³ See Ex 13:5.¹⁰⁴ See Gn 21:8.¹⁰⁵ Rom 14:2.¹⁰⁶ See 1 Kgs (Sam) 1:21-3.¹⁰⁷ Is 53:2, 3.¹⁰⁸ Mk 9:1.

shines on its own in our hearts, or is it found by those who seek, or does it enter into our thoughts? Each one must judge what we are expounding as he wishes. Nevertheless, one who sees and comprehends the eminence of the Word of God that destroys and conquers all persuasive arguments of liars who promise the truth, sees 'the Son of Man', that is the Word of God, 'coming in his kingdom'. And the one who sees the Word of God not only destroying and conquering the persuasive arguments of the adversaries but also declaring his own clear arguments, sees not only the kingdom but also the glory of the Word of God. And a person like that sees in himself 'the kingdom of God coming in power', not in weakness. The person, however, who is not so confident of the kingdom of God, that he is ready to suffer all things because of it, but is instead doubtful and fearful of hope of the kingdom does not see 'the kingdom of God coming in power' in himself. And that person sees it in whom 'sin' does not rule nor is he held under the domination of the sin that rules 'in the mortal body' of sinners,¹⁰⁹ but is under God the king of the universe. For the apostle says: 'And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as spiritual people, but as to people of the flesh as babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able. But you are still not able. For when there is envy and contentions among you are you not fleshly and walking in a human way?'¹¹⁰ The same person says elsewhere, 'But we speak wisdom among the perfect.'¹¹¹ If, therefore, those who are still fleshly and are babes in Christ and are not perfect are not able to understand the wisdom of the Word, nor are they capable of a spiritual understanding of him, how would they see with their mind the eminence of the Word, that is the kingdom of the Word and the glory of the Word, which are obscured by diverse sins?

33 But let us see what it is to taste 'death'. Death and life are two opposite things. He indeed is life who said, 'I am the life', of which it is written: 'And what was made in him', that is in the Word, 'is life'.¹¹² And death is hostile to the life of this Word, death which also will be destroyed as the last of all enemies, and which death the soul that sins dies.¹¹³ And seeing that it is said in the law, 'I have set before your face life and death', 'choose life', each of us is constantly choosing between these alternatives by the things that he does.¹¹⁴ Just as, therefore, he 'who descended from heaven and gave life to this world' is life and living bread, so too his enemy, death, is dead bread.¹¹⁵ And every rational soul is nurtured either on living or dead bread by those works¹¹⁶ or teachings, good or bad, which it undertakes. And as it is with common bread that at one time someone only tastes it but at another will eat more of it, so also with those breads, some may eat a little, only tasting it, but others will eat abundantly of it.

¹⁰⁹ See Rom 6:12. ¹¹⁰ 1 Cor 3:1-3. ¹¹¹ 1 Cor 2:6. ¹¹² Jn 11:25; 14:6; 1:3, 4.

¹¹³ See 1 Cor 15:26; Ez 18:4. ¹¹⁴ Dt 30:15, 19. ¹¹⁵ Jn 6:33.

¹¹⁶ Vogt (1999c) 100-1 considers this to be an arbitrary insertion by the Latin translator, and contrary to Origen's view that the Logos himself is the soul's food.

The good, of course, eat of the living bread which descends from heaven, and the evil eat of the dead bread which is death. And perhaps those who sin rarely and in a minor way, only taste 'death', and those who have undertaken spiritual virtue more perfectly do not even taste it, but always feed on living bread. It followed, therefore, that Peter, against whom the gates of the underworld will not prevail, should not even taste 'death', since it is when 'the gates of death prevail' against him, whether in a minor way or great, that someone tastes or eats 'death'.¹¹⁷ But it was also impossible for the sons 'of thunder', born of lofty speech, that is of thunder, to taste death. This, therefore, the Word prophesies of the perfect, so that, because they stand with the Word, their progress may be so great that they do not even taste 'death until they see' the advent and glory and kingdom and preeminence of the Word of God. Consequently, he stands out above every word which, by the appearance of truth, still distracts for a time and allures those people who are not able to burst asunder the bonds of distraction and ascend to the preeminence of the Word of truth.

34 But perhaps it appears to some that this promise of the Saviour is limited by some time, so that 'they will not', indeed, 'taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom', but afterwards 'they will'. Therefore, we must produce examples from the customary usage of Scripture in which the phrase 'until they see' is used when it does not at all define a time and mean that after that 'until' transpires, what previously had not happened happens. And what is more, the Lord relates the essential point, for he says to his eleven disciples when he has arisen from the dead, 'And behold I am with you in all the days until the end of the age'.¹¹⁸ Therefore, he was to be with them 'until the end of the age', but after the end of this age, when the future age is impending did he no longer promise to be with them so that this time before the end of the age would be better for the disciples than that future time? For even if someone should dare say that after the end of the age Jesus will no longer be with his disciples, since the discourse shows that he will be with them for so long, ***¹¹⁹ it is clear that what was being asked was if the Son of God was to be with his disciples before the future age and before those expected promises of God. And I ask consequently, since it is clear that he is with his disciples 'until the end of the age', whether he is always with his disciples, or sometimes he is and sometimes he is not. And I ask this because of his statement, 'And behold I will be with you all the days', lest perhaps he is, indeed, with his disciples throughout the days, but not the nights. And if we think it absurd to say that he denied that he will be with his disciples in the nights because of this statement that he will be with his disciples in the days, and not in the nights, doubtless we are not compelled to accept that understanding that we should say that those who have seen 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' taste 'death' after they have been

¹¹⁷ See Mt 16:18.

¹¹⁸ Mt 28:20.

¹¹⁹ Diehl and Klostermann posit something missing here based on the Greek text.

considered worthy to see something such as that. But just as in that Scripture that we mentioned, it was necessary to recognize that he will not leave us 'until the end of the age' but will be with us 'all the days', but after the end of the age he left as is clear, because he will be with us in a much greater way, so too here in this passage I think it is very clear to all who are able to understand the sequence of events that he who has once seen 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, and' has seen him 'in his glory' and 'the kingdom coming in power' will now by no means taste 'death' after the sight of so many good things. But without the word of Jesus' promise we will perhaps think, and not without reason, that we will taste 'death', since people shall not have been considered worthy to see 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory', and 'the kingdom of God in power'.

35 Since here indeed it has been written by the three evangelists, 'they will not taste death', but various things have been said of death in other Scriptures, it is not superfluous that we also compare those sayings with these and discuss more fully what it is to taste 'death'. It is said in the Psalms, 'Who is the person who will live, and not see death?'¹²⁰ Again, likewise, 'May death come upon them, and may they descend into the underworld alive.'¹²¹ Likewise in one of the prophets, 'Death prevailed and swallowed them',¹²² and likewise in Revelation, 'Death and the underworld follow' certain ones.¹²³ It seems to me, then, in these passages that it is one thing to taste 'death', but another to see 'death', and still another for 'death' to come upon certain ones, and another for 'death' to swallow someone, and yet another for 'death' to follow someone.

But I am seeking in these investigations whether it is more serious to taste death than to see it. Likewise, it is worse for him whom death follows than for him who tastes it, and not only that it follows him but also that death should come upon someone and apprehend him whom it was following. But to be swallowed by death seems to me to be more serious than all of them. And if you have considered the distinctions between sins, I think that you will not hesitate to accept that these things that we have brought together about the diversity of death have been said in the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit.

36 'But after six days (according to Matthew and Mark¹²⁴) taking Peter and James and John his brother, he led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them.'¹²⁵

It seems to me that it is not in vain that those whom Jesus leads 'up a high mountain' and considers worthy of seeing his transfiguration in secret are lead 'after six days'. For since the whole visible world was made in six days, a perfect number, I think the one who transcends everything of the world, contemplating no longer 'what things are seen' (for they are 'temporal'), but what things

¹²⁰ Ps 88:49.

¹²¹ Ps 54:16.

¹²² Is 25:8.

¹²³ Rev 6:8.

¹²⁴ Mk 9:2.

¹²⁵ Mt 17:1, 2.

'are not seen' (since they are 'eternal'), can ascend 'a high mountain' with Christ himself leading, and can also behold the glory of the Word of God. If, therefore, anyone of us desires to ascend 'a high mountain' with Christ himself taking him, and to see his transfiguration secretly, let us transcend the works of 'the six days', not looking to 'what things are seen', or loving 'the world or the things that are in the world', or desiring any worldly longing which is a longing that belongs to bodies, or any riches or glory pertaining to the body, or all kinds of things that customarily tear the soul away and drag it from things that are better and more divine and bring it down to things that are inferior. But when we shall have transcended the 'six days' (as we explained them), we will observe a new Sabbath, rejoicing on the high mountain, in that we see Jesus transfigured before the eyes of our heart. But the Word of God has differing appearances, appearing to each one in proportion to what he knows to be advantageous to the one who sees him; he shows himself to no one beyond what the person comprehends.

37 But you will investigate if, when 'he was transfigured before' those whom he had lead 'up a high mountain', he appeared to them 'in the form of God' in which he existed previously, just as he had 'the form of a slave' to those who were below, but to those who follow him 'after six days up a high mountain' he now did not have 'the form of a slave', but of God?¹²⁶ But hear this as spiritual if you can, because it does not say simply, 'He was transfigured', but there is a certain necessary addition that Matthew and Mark¹²⁷ have written. It is said as follows in both: 'He was transfigured before them'. You will say, therefore, that according to this, it is possible for Christ to be transfigured with that transfiguration 'before' some but, at the same time, not to be transfigured 'before' others but to be 'in the form of a slave'. But if you wish to see the transfiguration of Christ that occurred 'before' those who ascended 'the high mountain in secret' with him, consider with me how the Jesus in the Gospels is understood in a simple way by those who do not ascend the 'high mountain' of wisdom by works which rise up and by the exercise of spiritual words, but to those who do ascend he is known 'no longer according to the flesh' but is understood as God the Word and is trusted and cherished in 'the form of God'. It is 'before' these, therefore, that Jesus is transfigured, and not 'before' those who are below, living an earthly manner of life. But whenever he shall be transfigured, and 'his face' shall shine 'as the sun' so that it may be found shining on the sons 'of light' who 'have stripped themselves of the works of darkness and put on the armour of light',¹²⁸ and are no longer 'sons of darkness and night', but have become sons 'of God' and walk 'honourably as in the day', and when he has been made manifest he will shine on them not simply 'as the sun', but they see him to be the sun 'of justice'.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ See Phil 2:6, 7.

¹²⁷ Mk 9:2.

¹²⁸ See Rom 13:12.

¹²⁹ See 1 Thess 5:5; Rom 13:13; Mal 3:20 (=4:2).

38 And not only was he transfigured 'before' such of his disciples, but 'his garments', which are the words and letters of the Gospels with which Jesus is clothed, also 'became white like light'. But I also think that what the apostles said about him are 'garments' of Jesus that become 'white' to those who ascend 'the high mountain' with Jesus. But since there are differences in white they do not become just any 'white', but 'white as light'. If, therefore, you ever see someone carefully and perfectly making clear the divinity of Christ and in addition, all the sayings of the Gospels, do not hesitate to say that to such a person 'the garments' of Christ have become 'white as light'. But if the Son of God is understood and perceived in such a way when he has been transfigured that 'his face' is 'as the sun' and 'his garments white as light', 'Moses', that is the Law, 'and Elijah', that is the prophets, will immediately appear 'conversing with Jesus' before people who see him like this, for this is what is meant by the words, 'speaking with him'. In the Gospel according to Luke, however, 'Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and were speaking about his departure which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.'¹³⁰ And if anyone sees the glory of Moses and understands the spiritual law uniting with the words of Jesus and sees 'the wisdom hidden in a mystery' in the prophets, that person sees Moses and Elijah 'in glory' when he has seen them one with Jesus.

39 We must also explain what is said in Mark, which reads as follows: 'And while he was praying, he was transfigured'.¹³¹ Indeed, perhaps it is then that we especially see the Word transfigured before us, if we shall have done those things that are mentioned earlier: ascended 'the mountain' and seen Jesus speaking with the Father (that is speaking in harmony with the Father) and praying (that is, subjecting himself) to the Father, the only true God.¹³² And when he has been seen in this way, speaking with the Father and praying to him, then, according to Mark, 'his garments become shining and white as snow, such as no launderer on earth can make them white',¹³³ before those who see him speaking with the Father and praying to the Father. And perhaps we can consider the launderers 'on earth' morally to be the wise 'of this age'¹³⁴ who are preeminent and communicate attentively to certain people by the language of their teaching which they consider to be brilliant and pure, so that they believe that they embellish even shameful ideas and false doctrines by their ingenious laundering. But it is the Word who shows 'his garments brilliant' to those who ascend the mountain, and more brilliant than the launderer's skill can make them. He shows the splendour of the spiritual meanings in the artless words of the Scriptures which many despise.

¹³⁰ Lk 9:30, 31.

¹³¹ Mk 9:1. This clause, however, does not appear in the Latin Biblical MSS. See the note on this section in the translation of the Greek text.

¹³² See Jn 17:3.

¹³³ Mk 9:2.

¹³⁴ See 1 Cor 1:20-1; 2:6.

40 After this, let us see what 'Peter' understands and 'says to the Lord: Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make three booths: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'.¹³⁵

I think this must be investigated especially because Mark, as if on his own, says in addition, 'For he did not know what he should say in response' and Luke says, 'Peter said this not knowing what he was saying'.¹³⁶ For if he said these things not knowing what he was saying, it must be considered whether perhaps he was saying these things outside his own mental powers, moved by some foreign spirit. We cannot think, however, that it was the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit had not come on any believer in Jesus, as John testifies, 'Because Jesus had not yet been glorified',¹³⁷ but he who did not know what he was saying was speaking, moved by some foreign spirit. For the principalities and powers had not yet been exposed to ridicule and triumphed over on the wood.¹³⁸ And it was that spirit, perhaps, which earlier Christ had pronounced to be a stumbling block to himself and to be Satan, when he said, 'Go behind me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me'.¹³⁹ But I know that the things I am saying will appear adverse and harsh to many who read them and do not judge them wisely, as if spoken in blasphemy of Peter who, shortly before, was pronounced blessed by Christ, to whom Christ said, 'Not flesh and blood', but God the Father had revealed knowledge of his Son.¹⁴⁰ But let those who think Peter or the other apostles had become perfect before the passion of Christ and free from every foreign spirit tell us how he had snatched them from evil, or when he had redeemed them 'with' his 'precious blood'.¹⁴¹ Or let them say how they were heavy with sleep, as Luke puts it, at the time of the transfiguration of Christ.¹⁴²

Or certainly, that we may recall some past events in relation to the present exposition, do you think it is possible that someone be made to stumble in Christ without the operation of the devil who causes stumbling? Is it possible to deny Christ, and to do this before a maid servant, and a door-keeper, and contemptible people unless the hostile spirit and denier shall have been with the spirit and wisdom which is given to those who are helped by God to confess in accordance with some worthiness of soul? If, then, this is so, was not perhaps that spirit that wanted (so far as it was in his power) to cause Christ to stumble so that he might draw back from the passion for the salvation of all people, itself operating seductively here too wanting to tear Christ away under an appearance of good, so that he not descend to human beings nor come to them or take up death for them, but might remain on the high mountain with Moses and Elijah? And Peter promised also to make three booths, one privately for Jesus, another for Moses, and another for Elijah, as if one booth, in which they ought all to exist simultaneously, would not contain them.

¹³⁵ Mt 17:4.¹³⁹ Mt 16:23.¹³⁶ Mk 9:6; Lk 9:33.¹⁴⁰ See Mt 16:17.¹³⁷ Jn 7:39.¹⁴¹ See 1 Pet 1:19.¹³⁸ See Col 2:15.¹⁴² See Lk 9:32.

Perhaps also in this the spirit was working maliciously (through him who did not know what he was saying), not wanting Jesus, Moses, and Elijah to be together, but to separate them from one another by the pretence of the three booths, a thing that could not be done. For if Christ, the law, and the prophets are one, then Christ is proven to be the Son of God and the law and the prophets are found to have prophesied truly, because the law and the prophets gave testimony about Christ, predicting those things which were to be concerning Christ, and Christ gave testimony to the law and the prophets that their prophecies were true by fulfilling their prophecy in the actual events themselves. But if they are separated from one another neither is Christ made manifest nor are the prophets found to have spoken truly. This is what Peter's evil suggestion wants to happen when he says, 'Let us make three booths, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah', for which reason the evangelists said of Peter: 'He did not know what he was saying'. But furthermore, his statement, 'It is good for us to be here', was false. For if it had been good for them to be there, they would have certainly remained there, and would not have declined to do what was good. But if his statement, 'It is good for us to be here' was false, who do you think suggested that he speak falsely if not him who 'is a liar and its father'?¹⁴³ And just as there is no truth without the work of him who said, 'I am the truth', so it is not possible to lie without the devil, the inventor of the lie.

Therefore, the antitheses, truth and falsehood, were, still in Peter. It was from the truth that he said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', in which also he was pronounced blessed and deserved, through the promise, to become the foundation of the church. But it was from falsehood that he said, 'And this shall not happen to you', for after Jesus went to Jerusalem he suffered many things from those at whose hands he suffered. And he spoke the words, 'It is good for us to be here' at the suggestion of falsehood. Now how does the person who does not want Peter to have said those things from some working of an evil spirit but purely from his own free will defend that which the evangelists have said of him: 'But Peter said these things not knowing what he was saying'? Now truly, since in the former passage he thought it abominable, as it were, and unworthy that the Son 'of the living God', whom the Father had just now revealed to him, be killed, he said, 'God forbid, Lord, this will not happen to you'.¹⁴⁴ And in the present passage, as he saw the two forms of Jesus Christ and that great difference which had been shown to him by the transfiguration, pleased with that form, he said, 'It is good for us to be here', so that he and those who were with him might be pleased seeing Jesus' transfiguration and 'his face' shining 'as the sun and his garments white as light'; likewise, that they might also always see Moses and Elijah (whom they saw but once 'in glory') and enjoy hearing them speaking to one another, Moses and Elijah to Christ, and Christ to them.

¹⁴³ Jn 8:44.

¹⁴⁴ See Mt 16:16-17, 22.

41 Since we have not yet touched on any moral sense in this passage, but have said these things following out the simple understanding of the words, let us now see if perhaps when they ascend to the height of the doctrines of the truth and see the transfiguration of Christ and the glory of Moses and Elijah, they wanted to make booths in themselves for the Word of God who was dwelling in them and for his law (which they had seen with them 'in glory') and for the prophecy (which was speaking of Christ's 'departure'). And because Peter desires that remarkable life and its delight, he puts his own advantage before that of the many which would result for people from Christ descending to them, and says, 'It is good for us to be here', and, 'If you wish, let us make three booths'. But because love 'does not seek the things that are its own',¹⁴⁵ Jesus did not do what seemed good to Peter, but descended 'from the mountain' to those who were not able to ascend it and to see the transfiguration of the Son of God, so that they could, at least, see him as they were able to receive him. It is the character of the just person who also possesses love and does not seek 'his own things', that he should indeed be 'free from all' but make himself the 'servant' of all (especially of those whose life is below), 'that' he might gain 'more'.¹⁴⁶

42 'While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them and there was a voice from the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him'.¹⁴⁷

I think the meaning in this passage is something like this: When God prohibits Peter from making 'three booths' in which they might dwell as Peter wishes, he shows him one booth which was better and much more illustrious than what Peter wanted to make, for it is the proper work of a booth to overshadow any and all who are under it. But the 'bright cloud' overshadowing them was showing them, as an example, that more divine and splendid rest that is to come,¹⁴⁸ which would protect and enlighten them at the same time. And what might the 'bright cloud' overshadowing the saints be if not perhaps the paternal power from which comes the voice of the Father giving testimony to the Son as beloved, and exhorting those who are overshadowed by it not to obey any other? Perhaps also that 'bright cloud' is the Holy Spirit overshadowing the saints and prophesying, with God working in the Spirit and saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'. And I might also dare say that the bright cloud is our Saviour. For a 'bright cloud' always overshadows the beloved disciples of Christ and the Gospel, the law, and the prophets, as those understand who are able to look at this light in the Gospel, the law, or the prophets. And the 'voice from the cloud' says to Moses and Elijah, who were desiring to see the Son of God and to hear him, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him'. Or, the voice was teaching the disciples that the one who was seen at that time and who was in the proper sense 'Son' of God and

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor 13:5.¹⁴⁶ 1 Cor 9:19.¹⁴⁷ Mt 17:5.¹⁴⁸ See Heb 4:9-10.

'beloved' with God, 'in whom' he was well pleased, whose face shone 'as the sun and his garments became like light' when he had been transfigured, was the one it was especially necessary to hear.

43 Next it is written that when the three apostles hear the bright cloud bearing testimony to the Son of God, because they are unable to bear up under the glory of the voice and the power proceeding from it, they become suppliants before God and fall 'on their face', for 'they were exceedingly fearful' of the novelty of the sight and the testimony 'of the voice'. For when the disciples understand that he is the very Son of the God who had appeared to Moses and said, 'A person shall not see my face and live', after they have seen 'the face' of the Son of God become 'as light' and have heard the testimony of God about him, they are unable to bear the splendours of the Word and are humbled 'under the mighty hand of God'.¹⁴⁹ They show this by falling on their face from fear. 'But lifting up their eyes, they see Jesus only'.

The simple meaning of the word, indeed, is as follows: that 'Moses and Elijah' 'having been seen in glory' and 'having spoken' with Jesus, departed whence they had come, perhaps to pass on the word that Jesus had spoken to them to those who had not yet been benefited by him who, at the time of his passion, when the tombs were opened, and 'many bodies of the sleeping saints' were to go 'into the holy city', that Jerusalem over which Jesus did not weep, so that they might appear 'to many' there. But the spiritual understanding related to the mystery is this, that rising, 'they saw no' other 'except Jesus only'. For Moses, that is the law, and Elijah, that is the prophets, had become one, both changed into the Gospel of Christ, and they had not remained three as they previously were, but the three had become one.

After the mystery revealed on the mountain, therefore, 'Jesus commanded' the disciples 'as they were descending from the mountain, saying that they should tell no one the vision until the Son of Man should arise from the dead'.¹⁵⁰ This is similar to that which was already treated above when 'he commanded the disciples that they tell no one that he was the Christ'.¹⁵¹ Therefore, what was said there can be useful to us also in this passage, since here too Jesus wants his glory to be revealed to no one before the glory of his passion and resurrection.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ex 33:20; 1 Pet 5:6.

¹⁵⁰ Mt 17:9.

¹⁵¹ Mt 16:20.

¹⁵² See above, 12.15-18.

Book 13 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 17:10–18:18

1 'And his disciples asked him saying, Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?'¹

The disciples' question, 'Why then do the scribes say,' looks back to something that has been written previously; therefore, as we are able, let us attempt to clarify this question. The disciples who ascended the mountain with Christ remembered the tradition of the scribes that the prophet Elijah was to come before the advent of the Christ so that he might prepare the souls that would receive him. But the vision which occurred on the mountain in which Elijah too was seen did not seem to them to agree with the tradition of the scribes about Elijah, because Elijah did not seem to have come before Christ, but with Christ. Therefore, thinking the tradition of the scribes to be false because of this vision, they said of Elijah, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' For you have been made manifest to us prior to Elijah, and you came to this human life before he did. When Jesus responds to this question, he in no way rejects what had been handed down by the scribes about Elijah, but indicates that there had been another coming of Elijah before himself, of which the scribes had no knowledge. And being ignorant that it was Elijah, they became participants, in a way, in his execution and did to him what they wished, as they were to do also to the Christ. Therefore, Jesus 'responded and said, Elijah, indeed, will come first and he will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him.'² He said this because of John.

'Elijah has already come': Elijah, not the soul of Elijah, is to be understood, lest we fall into the teaching of transmigration, which is foreign to Christian truth. For it is contrary to what the apostle says, 'The things which are seen are temporal', and this world has an end, and to that which the Lord himself says,

¹ Mt 17:10.

² Mt 17:11, 12.

'Heaven and earth will pass away', and furthermore to that prophetic word that says, 'In the beginning you founded the earth, O Lord, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish.'³ For if, as they think, the same soul can exist twice in the body in the same condition from the beginning of the age to its end, why, I ask, does it come to exist twice? If it is because of sin, why does the soul not come to exist three or more times in the body so that it might suffer the penalty of transmigration on account of this life and the sins committed in it since, in this view, this is the sole occasion for the punishment inflicted on sinful souls. If this punishment is inflicted as a consequence, the soul will not soon cease to receive a body repeatedly, for it will always be returned on account of previous transgressions and consequently there will be no place for the end of the world. For if, according to this argument, the soul that has no sin at all is granted not to return to a body, how many years do you think it would take to discover one soul that is completely free of sin and has no need for transmigration? Nevertheless, also as some single soul from the defined number of souls is always transferred and no longer returns to a body, birth will cease sometime after innumerable ages when the world has been reduced to some one, two, or three souls, after which, when they too have no need to be returned because of their perfect righteousness, the world will be ended, since, of course, there are none remaining who are being returned to the body.

This does not agree with the truth of the Scriptures, for they know that a multitude of sinners will be found at the time of the consummation. The Lord himself reveals this when he says, 'Nevertheless, when the Son of Man shall come, do you think he will find faith on the earth?'⁴ Likewise, he says elsewhere, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so will the coming of the Son of Man be, for as before the flood, they were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until Noah entered the ark and the flood came and took them all, so will also the coming of the Son of Man be.'⁵ The punishment for those who at that time will be sinners will not be in transmigration, but in fire. Wherefore the Gentiles, who defend the doctrine of transmigration, as a natural sequence as it were, wish to say here that they deny that there is any consummation. We reply against them: If the world is not consumed but shall exist without end, there is no God knowing all things before they happen. He will know, perhaps, one thing or another before it happens, but not all things, for things that are without end can, by no definition, be understood. It follows that not even prophecies can occur about all things seeing that all things have been established without end.

² We say the following to those who think the soul of John was the soul of Elijah, first called Elijah and afterwards John: Why did the angel who appeared to Zachariah say, 'Behold Elisabeth your wife will conceive and will bare you a

³ 2 Cor 4:18; Mt 24:35; Ps 101:26, 27.

⁴ Lk 18:8.

⁵ Mt 24:37-9.

son, and you shall call his name John?'⁶ For if it was the very soul of Elijah, it would have been necessary that the one born in the second place be called Elijah, or some reason be shown for the change of name, as Abram being changed to Abraham, and Sara to Sarah, and Jacob to Israel, and Simon to Peter. Nevertheless, no such valid reason is found, since their names were changed in one and the same life. But someone will say, If John was not the soul of Elijah, why did the Saviour call John Elijah? I think that Gabriel showed the part of Elijah that was transferred into John in the words he addressed to Zechariah, for he said, 'And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to the sons, and the unbelieving to the wisdom of the saints.'⁷ He did not say, He shall go before him in the soul of Elijah. Scripture clearly knows the soul to be one thing and the spirit another, just as Paul testifies and says, 'And may God sanctify you perfectly, and may your spirit, soul, and body be preserved whole without quarrelling in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ', and in Daniel: 'Bless the Lord, O spirits and souls of the saints.'⁸ John, therefore, has not been called Elijah because of his soul, but because of his spirit and power. It does not contradict the truth of Scripture if the spirit was first in Elijah and later came to be in John, just as the apostle says appropriately, 'The spirit of prophets is subject to prophets'; he did not say, The souls of prophets are subject to prophets. Let us take what is said in the fourth book of Kings as a further confirmation of those words the angel spoke, 'And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah'. It is as follows: 'And it happened when he had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I may do for you before I am taken from you. And Elisha said, May your spirit be double in me. And Elijah said, You have asked austere. Nevertheless, if you shall see me ascending from you, this will come to pass for you; but if not, it will not come to pass.'⁹ And because he said, 'If you shall see me, it will come to pass; if not, it will not come to pass', Scripture, wishing to show that it happened for Elisha just as he asked, adds, 'And Elijah ascended into heaven in a whirlwind, as it were, and Elisha was watching, and he cried out and said, Father, Father, the charioteer of Israel, and he did not see him further.'¹⁰ Because he saw him, therefore, the spirit (not the soul) of Elijah rested on Elisha. Likewise, after that 'Elisha struck the waters of the Jordan and they were divided to one side and the other, and Elisha crossed, and the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho saw him and said: The spirit of Elijah has rested on Elisha. And they went to meet him and bowed down on the ground to him.'¹¹

We have said this so that we may understand that John was said to be Elijah not because he had the same soul, but because he had the same spirit, as also the disciples of Christ understood it. And because only the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, but John went before Christ not only 'in the spirit' but also 'in

⁶ Lk 1:13.

⁷ Lk 1:17.

⁸ 1 Thess 5:23; Dan 3:86 (LXX).

⁹ 4 Kgs (2 Kgs) 2:9-10.

¹⁰ 4 Kgs (2 Kgs) 2:12.

¹¹ 4 Kgs (2 Kgs) 2:14, 15.

the power of Elijah', therefore Elisha was not said to be Elijah, but John was said to be Elijah himself. And if Elijah is understood as some word, inferior to that Word which was 'in the beginning with God',¹² and in this way, can be sent in advance, consequently Elijah is seen to be a word that is sent forth for the discipline, as it were, of perfecting humanity for the reception of the perfect Word. We touched on this meaning partially above, as we were able, where we treated the words, 'And if you wish to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. Let him who has ears to hear, hear'.¹³

'And they did in him whatever they wished'.¹⁴ But in addition, let us see to whom he refers when he says, 'And they did in him whatever they wished'. Was it to the scribes of whom the 'disciples' asked and said, 'Why, then, do the scribes say?' But we do not find that John suffered anything from the scribes, unless perhaps that they did not believe him, or perhaps what we said above, that they became associates in those things that Herod inflicted on John. Another, however, will say that his statement, 'And they did in him whatever they wished' does not refer to the scribes but to Herod and Herodias and her daughter. And for this reason, what follows, 'So also the Son of Man will suffer from them', is said consequently. If the first statement pertains to the scribes so does this; but if the first refers to Herod, Herodias, and her daughter, the second also refers to them, for Herod and his whole house is found to have been an accomplice in the death of Christ.

3 'And when he had come to the crowd, a man approached him falling on his knees before him and saying, Lord, Be merciful to my son, for he is epileptic and suffers badly; for sometimes he falls into fire and sometimes into water, and I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cast him out', and what follows.¹⁵

People who are suffering or who are family of those suffering are not on the mountain but are with the crowd. Therefore, for the sake of the people he descended to his human ministry from the high mountain of divinity as it were, just as he ascended the high mountain and there transformed himself into his glory for the sake of his chosen disciples who knew him. For he previously descended to the lowliness of humanity because of those ignorant of him,¹⁶ and when he became known to them, he led them to knowledge of his divinity so that they might say with the apostle, 'And if we have known Christ according to the flesh, we do not know him in this way now'.¹⁷ He descended, therefore, to the crowd so that he might benefit those who were not able to ascend on high because of their infirmities. And now, therefore, if he had not come 'to the crowd' with his chosen disciples 'a man' would not have approached 'him falling on his knees and saying, Lord, Be merciful to my son'.

¹² Jn 1:1, 2.¹³ Mt 11:14, 15.¹⁴ Mt 17:12.¹⁵ Mt 17:14-15.¹⁶ See Phil 2:6-7.¹⁷ 2 Cor 5:16.

But we must consider what infirmities those are suffering who believe and intercede for their own healing or touch the hem of his garment and are healed, and what those were suffering who do not do this but others do it for them, as for example the centurion for his servant, the royal officer for his son, the ruler of the synagogue for his daughter, the Canaanite woman for her troubled daughter, and now the man 'who falls on his knees' for his epileptic son.¹⁸ And you will consider with these the example of the Saviour healing on his own when asked by no one, as he did for the paralytic who was held in his infirmity for thirty-eight years.¹⁹ For when the healings have been compared and discussed, they will exhibit many teachings about differences in the infirmities of the soul and the manner of its healing to those who are able to hear the wisdom of God hidden 'in a mystery'.²⁰

4 But since I am not discussing all the examples now but the teaching before us let us see first who we can say this moonstruck child is in the moral sense, then who we think his father is who asks on his behalf, third what it is for the one who is suffering to fall, not always but 'frequently, sometimes into fire' and 'sometimes into water', and why it is that he could not be healed at all by the disciples of Christ, but only by the Lord Jesus himself. The reason is this: Because every sickness and infirmity in the people that the Saviour healed at that time was related to spiritual infirmities of souls connected with the differences of their sufferings. Consequently, we think those who are uncontrolled in their soul and keep it prostrate on the body are paralytics in soul; those who do not consider intelligently what is just or unjust are blind in soul; those who are not prepared to receive words of salvation are deaf in soul. It is appropriate that we inquire about the moonstruck child in a similar fashion. This phenomenon is a change from better conditions to worse. The person who suffers it appears like a healthy person in every way during the time the change does not affect him. And you find this kind of infirmity of soul in some people. They are frequently thought to be healthy in purity or mercy, and to live in accordance with the desire for justice. But sometimes, as if by a kind of seizure of spirit, they are seized by passions and fall from that good standing where they were thought to stand²¹ and are led astray to the seductions of this age and to other desires of the flesh. Perhaps you will not err if you say that people of this sort (if I may speak in this fashion) are spiritually moonstruck. They are thrown down by 'the spiritual powers of wickedness in heavenly places' and are 'frequently ill' during the time the passions seize their souls, and they fall 'into' the flames 'of fire', since 'they commit adultery', as Hosea says, 'as a fiery furnace'.²² And people of this sort sometimes fall 'into water' when the dragon, the 'king of all the creatures in the waters',²³ casts them down from their freedom of soul into the deep waves of the sea, that is into the worst evils of this human life,

¹⁸ See Mt 9:20, 21; Mt 8:5; Jn 4:46; Mk 5:22; Mt 15:22.

¹⁹ Jn 5:5-6.

²⁰ See 1 Cor 2:7.

²¹ See 1 Cor 10:12.

²² See Eph 6:12; Hos 7:4.

²³ Job 41:26.

which is compared to the sea. What wisdom says of the constancy of a just person favours this interpretation of ours about the moonstruck child: 'The wise person persists like the sun,' but of the inconstancy of the sinner it says: 'But the fool changes like the moon.'²⁴ It is possible to see certain impulses, as it were, for good works snatch such people away, to the extent that they can extract praises from people, but it is from those people who are unaware of the hidden inconstancy in their heart. But you see them again diminishing and the light that was seen in them is discovered not to be the light of day, but of night and lunar, and it diminishes to the point that what was thought to be light is seen not to be light at all.

5 Perhaps, then, an angel who had been allotted that moonstruck child (if we must say that every human soul has been placed under some angel, as under a father), is called the father of this sort of moonstruck child, and begs the physician of souls for mercy for his child that he might free him whom the shallow understanding of the disciples of Christ could not deliver from his disease. And if the 'unspeaking and deaf' demon needs to be understood morally, we say that an irrational impulse which is seen to have the appearance of good must be said to be an unspeaking and deaf demon which is expelled by the word of Christ alone, because the one who is such does not see what is just or unjust, as he is blind, nor does he accept the exhortation of the disciples of Christ, as he is deaf. Therefore, he must, be healed by the word of Christ, so that he who, acting on an irrational utterance, used to do things thought to be good by those seeing them, from now on does not act without reason but acts in accordance with the word of the teaching of Christ. Afflictions of this kind are difficult to heal because they are thrown down vigorously as soon as they have done those things that are thought to be good, and the activity working in them is evil and is so great and strong amid all evils that it is compared to a 'mountain' that is not expelled by being permissive nor does it depart except by the 'all faith' of him who knows how to heal conditions of this kind, for it is by 'all faith' that mountains of this kind are removed. But 'all faith' is compared to a grain 'of mustard,' so that what is written can become clear from that, 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard, you will say to this mountain: Move from here to there, and it will be moved.'²⁵ And the apostle says, 'If you have all faith, so that you may remove mountains.'²⁶ I think, therefore, that 'all faith' is compared to a grain of mustard because people despise faith and consider it something insignificant and cheap but when it shall have obtained a good soul (that is earth receptive to seed of this kind) 'it becomes a great tree so that' nothing without wings, but those with wings (which are the 'birds of heaven' spiritually) dwell 'in its branches.'²⁷

²⁴ Sir 27:11. The Latin translator has followed the Vulgate rather than Origen's text of the LXX here in reading, 'The wise person persists like the sun,' rather than, 'The discourse of a pious person is always wisdom.'

²⁵ Mt 17:21.

²⁶ 1 Cor 13:2.

²⁷ See Mt 13:31-2.

6 But since we must also interpret the words themselves, let us ask first why the one who is troubled by an unclean spirit is called moonstruck, and why this affliction receives its name from the moon, which is called the great luminary after the sun. Let the medical doctors, then, say what they wish among themselves. They do not think it is an unclean spirit but some physical affliction. They say that the fluids in the head are moved by some sympathetic connection with the light of the moon which has a fluid nature. We, however, who believe the Gospel say that this affliction is caused by an unclean spirit in people. For it observes certain phases of the moon and, consequently, feigns that people suffer from the observation of certain phases of the moon, and in this way, indicates that the creation of God is the culprit, so that all (as we have said) speak 'iniquity against the height' who think that the cause of every infirmity, whether in general or particular, is from the influence of the stars. They accuse the works of God and say that some stars are injurious and others beneficial, when God has made no star to be injurious, for according to Jeremiah as he has said in the Lamentations, "Things evil and good do not proceed from the mouth of the Lord."²⁸

And perhaps in the same way as that unclean spirit observes certain phases of the moon so that it may work in the one who has been delivered to him for some reason, so too other demons, in accordance with other phases of other stars, lie in wait for those who have not shown themselves worthy of the protection of the holy angels. Consequently, not only the moon but also other stars are blasphemed by people who are not hesitant to speak 'iniquity against the height' and to set 'their mouth against heaven'.²⁹

7 After this, let us see what the Lord said when he spoke to the father of the moonstruck child: 'O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long will I support you?' For since not even the disciples of Jesus themselves 'had been able to heal him', as still being of 'little faith', therefore he said, 'O unbelieving generation.' And if he said, 'O unbelieving generation' to them, what would he say to us? And the fact that he says, 'Perverse', shows that wickedness, coming from outside nature, has been introduced from perversity. And I think it was on account of the perversity of the whole human race, as though weighed down by their sinfulness and his association with them that he said, 'How long shall I be with you? How long shall I support you?'³⁰

Let us also look at his statement, 'This kind is not cast out except with fasting and prayers', so that if we ever have to persevere in the curing of those suffering something like this, we will not adjure, interrogate, or speak to the unclean spirit as though it hears, but 'persevering in prayers and fasting' we may gain

²⁸ Ps 72:8; Lam 3:38. See Origen's long discussion on the stars and fate from his *Commentary on Genesis* preserved in *Philocalia* 23.

²⁹ Ps 72:8, 9.

³⁰ Mt 17:17.

from God the deliverance of the one suffering and we may drive off the evil spirit with our fasts and prayers.

8 'And when they were abiding in Galilee Jesus said to them, It will be that the Son of Man is handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and after the third day he will arise, and they were very sad.'³¹

And a little above it was said, 'Then Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes of the people and be killed, and on the third day arise.'³² These words, indeed, appear to be similar to those, so that one might easily say that the Lord is repeating the same things. This is not the case. It is not the same to show the disciples 'that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things' and what follows, and to say to the disciples who were 'in Galilee' (which we did not learn above), that 'it will be that the Son of Man is handed over'. For it was not said above that he was 'handed over', but in this passage, we hear that he is not only to be handed over, but also that he is to be handed over 'into the hands of men'. In relation to this we ask by whom he is to be handed over 'into the hands of men', or into whose hands. For there we are taught by whom he will suffer and in what place he will suffer; here, however, we learn that he will suffer 'many things' from those mentioned above, who do not themselves represent the primary reason he suffers many things. This is provided either by him or by them who betray him 'into the hands of men'. When the apostle relates the handing over he shows that the Son was handed over by God the Father as follows: 'Who did not spare his only Son, but handed him over for all of us.'³³ Someone else, collecting corresponding things on the same subject will say that first the Son was handed over by God to the prince 'of this age' and to his other princes, then these handed him over 'into the hands of men' who killed him. And he will take what has been written of Job as an example. First, Job was handed over by God into the hand of the devil, as it says, 'Behold I hand over to you everything that he possesses', and again, 'Behold I hand him over to you, but preserve his life.'³⁴ And when the devil receives his goods into his power, he delivers them to his plunderers and horsemen, which 'made three horns'. See, therefore, if perhaps just as the devil handed Job's goods over into the hands of the plunderers and horsemen, once the power had previously been received from God, so also by an operation of some kind the prince 'of the power of the air who is at work in the sons of disobedience' handed him over into the hands of men, among whom was Judas, whom 'Satan entered after the bread.'³⁵ Consider, moreover, that when the Father handed the Son over to the opposing powers he did not simply hand him over, but did so out of his mercy so that he might save the human race. When the hostile powers handed the Lord over into the hands of men, however, they did not hand him

³¹ Mt 17:22-3.

³² Mt 16:21.

³³ Rom 8:32.

³⁴ Job 1:12; 2:6.

³⁵ Eph 2:2; Jn 13:27.

over for the salvation of anyone but (so far as they were able, because no one of them knew 'the wisdom of God hidden in mystery') they handed him over to die, so that his 'enemy death' might subject him to itself just as all people who died 'in Adam'.³⁶ But also, the men who killed him did not do it in accord with the pre-ordained will of God, but in accord with the will of the powers who desired the Son of God to be subjected to death. He was not, therefore, handed over by men into the hands of men, but by powers to whom the Father handed him over for all of us so that in the fact that he was handed over and was under him to whom he was handed over 'he might destroy him who held the authority of death'.³⁷

9 And the devil must be understood to hold the 'authority of death'. This is not of that common death that all people die who are composed of soul and body when their soul withdraws from the body, but that death which is hostile to and an enemy of him who said, 'I am the life', in relation to which it is said, 'the soul that sins, it shall die'.³⁸ And it is shown that God did not hand the Lord over 'into the hands of men' because he himself says, 'If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would, by all means, resist so that I not be handed over to the Jews'.³⁹ But when he was handed over to the Jews he was handed over into the hands of men, not by his own servants or by any of those who were in his kingdom, but by the prince 'of this age' or by the princes, of whom it is said, 'The kings of the earth stood ready, and the princes gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ'.⁴⁰ And those physical kings stood ready indeed, just as the apostles prove in Acts.⁴¹ And we, who have profited because he was handed over by the princes 'into the hands of men', say this which is written, 'Let us burst through their bonds and cast their yoke forth from us', which can also be understood of the invisible kings and princes of this age.⁴² For when we have become 'conformed' to the death of Christ, we are no longer under the bonds of the kings 'of the earth' nor under the yoke of the princes 'of this age' who came together against the Lord.⁴³ It was for this reason also that the Father 'did not spare his only Son, but handed him over for all of us', so that when the princes received him and handed him over 'into the hands of men' they might be ridiculed by him who dwells 'in heaven' and derided by the Lord. These all acted for the destruction of their own kingdom and principality when they handed him over 'into the hands of men' who, rising on the 'third day' and destroying his enemy death, made us 'conformed' not only 'to his death' but also 'to his resurrection'.⁴⁴ But when the Lord announces that 'it will be that the Son of Man will be handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will arise, the disciples were very sad', since they

³⁶ See 1 Cor 2:7, 8; 15:26, 22.

³⁷ Heb 2:14.

³⁸ Jn 11:25; 14:6; Ez 18:4.

³⁹ Jn 18:36.

⁴⁰ Jn 14:30; Ps 2:2.

⁴¹ See Acts 4:27, 27.

⁴² Ps 2:3.

⁴³ See Rom 8:29; 6:5; Ps 2:2; 1 Cor 2:8.

⁴⁴ See Rom 8:32; Ps 2:3; 1 Cor 15:26; Rom 8:29; 6:5.

understood that he was to be handed over 'into the hands of men' and killed, but did not give attention to his words, 'And on the third day he will arise', nor did they consider who it might be for whom the space of three days was sufficient to destroy death.

10 'And when they entered Capernaum, those who demand the didrachma approached Peter and said, Does your teacher not pay the didrachma? He said, Yes. And when he entered the house Jesus preceded him and said, What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute or taxes, from their sons or from foreigners? Peter says to him, From foreigners. Jesus says to him, Therefore, the sons are free. But so that we do not cause them to stumble, go to the sea and throw in a hook and take the first fish that comes up. When you open its mouth, you will find a stater. Take that and give it to them for me and you'.⁴⁵

Some, therefore, are 'kings of the earth' and their sons. These do not pay tribute or tax. There are others, in addition to their sons, who are foreigners to the kings 'of the earth' from whom 'the kings of the earth receive tribute or tax'. And their 'sons indeed are free' with the kings 'of the earth' just as sons with fathers, and foreigners are 'free' outside the earth, but because of those who rule them and oppress them as 'the Egyptians did the children of Israel', they are slaves. It was because of these who were slaves that the Son of God, who did no servile work of clay, took up 'the form of a servant'.⁴⁶ Having, therefore, the form of that servant, as it were, he paid the tribute and tax which was not different from that which his disciple paid, for that stater, one coin, which was paid for Jesus and for his disciple, was sufficient. This coin, however, was not in Jesus' house, but was in the sea in the mouth of a fish of the sea, and this fish itself was, in my opinion, benefited by having gone up to Peter's hook and been caught by him who had been made a fisher of men. These latter included the one who now in a moral sense is called a fish, so that the coin having the image 'of Caesar' might be taken from him and he might join the ranks of those who had fished for him. Therefore, let the person who has the things that are 'Caesar's' give them back 'to Caesar' so that afterwards he may be able to give back 'to God the things that are God's'.⁴⁷ But since Jesus did not possess the image 'of Caesar' (for the prince 'of this age' had 'nothing' in him⁴⁸), he did not take that image 'of Caesar' from his own place, but from the suitable place of the sea, that he might give it to the kings 'of the earth for himself' and for his disciple, so that those 'who receive the didrachma' not think him a debtor to them and the kings 'of the earth'. For he paid the debt without taking it up, or possessing it, or acquiring it, or making it his own possession, so that the image 'of Caesar' might never exist with the image 'of the invisible God'.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Mt 17:23-6.

⁴⁸ Jn 14:30.

⁴⁶ See Phil 2:7.

⁴⁹ See Col 1:15.

⁴⁷ See Mt 22:19-21.

11 We have said these things in one manner, since this saying has a double meaning. In relation to the other meaning the following can be said: Some sons are sons of the kings of the earth. But because others are aliens from the sons of the kings of the earth, and are sons of none of those who are on the earth but, for this very reason, are sons of God, or of the Son of God, or of some one of the sons of God. When, therefore, the Saviour asks Peter, 'From whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute or tax, from their own sons or from those of others?' and Peter says, Not from their own but from others, and the Lord says of those who are foreign to the kings of the earth, 'Therefore the sons are free', consider the saying in some way such as the following. Those who are sons of God are free, but the sons of the kings of the earth are not free 'because everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin'.⁵⁰ Those who remain in the truth of the word of Jesus, however, are free and, because of this, know the truth, 'and the truth will make' them 'free' from the slavery of sin.⁵¹ If, then, in some mystery, the kings of the earth demand the didrachma which has the image of Caesar from the sons of God who are constituted free, consequently we must understand also that every time people rise up who unjustly take away our earthly goods, the kings of this earth have handed us over that they might exact from us the things that are theirs.

Whoever, therefore, is simply a son, and not a son of the kings of the earth, is free. Nevertheless, although he is free, he acts very carefully that he not cause the kings of the earth themselves to stumble, or their sons, or those who receive the didrachma. Therefore, he says, 'But so that we not cause them to stumble, go to the sea and put in a hook', and the following. And although they are unjust, nevertheless Christ acted very carefully that he not cause them to stumble, and by his example he prevents any stumbling to happen, even among people like this, whether to prevent them from sinning more because they were made to stumble, or so that they might be saved by receiving him who spared them that they not be made to stumble. And just as in a 'Field of Encouragement', for this is what Capernaum means, he encourages every disciple and pronounces him to be free and a son, and gives him the power to catch the fish first, so that when it comes up Peter might receive encouragement in addition to that fish for which he had fished, because of this stater that was removed from its open mouth to be given to those to whom the stater belongs and who exact the coin of this kind as their own.

12 You will be able to apply this text fittingly to the covetous who have no words in their mouth except about money. And when you see a person like this caught by some Peter, who has removed not only his chatting about money from his mouth, but also the desire for money from his entire disposition, you will say that the person like this was in the sea, in the briny things of this life and in the waves of the concerns of covetousness, and had a stater in his mouth

⁵⁰ Jn 8:34.

⁵¹ Jn 8:31-2.

as long as he existed in a faithless, covetous state, but he had come up from the sea, caught and saved on the hook of reason by some Peter who taught him the truth, so that he might no longer have the stater in his mouth, but in its place might have the image of God, that is, the words of God.

13 And take note for yourself that in Numbers according to the law of God a didrachma is not given straightforwardly for the saints, but a holy didrachma, for it is written, 'And you shall take five shekels per head, per holy didrachma'. But also, a holy didrachma is given by head for all the children of Israel. Since, therefore, it is not permitted for the saints of God to have a defiled didrachma with the holy didrachmas, the Saviour commands that the stater (which was equal to two didrachmas), which was found in the mouth of the fish that first came up, be given to those who do not receive the holy staters and who ask Peter, 'Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?' The Teacher gives this stater, and his disciples always give it for their salvation and the glory of Christ, so that they might put everything that has the image of Caesar far from them.

14 'In that hour his disciples came to Jesus saying, Who do you think is greater in the kingdom of heaven? And he took a child and stood him in their midst and said, Truly I say to you, unless you shall have been converted and become like a child, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. If anyone, then, shall have humbled himself as that child, he is greater in the kingdom of heaven. And he who has received such a child in my name has received me.'⁵²

Although Matthew could have explained only this for our instruction, namely what the disciples asked Jesus when they came to him and how he responded to their question, he added, according to some copies, 'in that hour the disciples came to Jesus', and according to others, 'in that day'. And we must not leave the intention of the evangelist undiscussed. Therefore, setting forth what he says in the first words 'in that day' or 'in that hour' let us see if that addition of day or hour is necessary. For Jesus with his disciples came into 'Capernaum', where 'those who exact the didrachma came to Peter and' questioning him 'said, Does your teacher not pay the didrachma?' 'Thus Peter, responding to them, says, Yes.' Then Jesus, constructing an argument about the didrachma, sends Peter to catch a 'fish' with a hook, in whose mouth a 'stater' would be found so that it might be given for himself and Peter. I think, therefore, that because they believed this to be a very great honour Christ conferred on Peter (as if by this he had judged him to be better than the other disciples) they desired to know for certain what they were warily suspecting. But at the same time, they were hoping that by inquiring they might learn the reason for Peter's exaltation. It is, therefore, in his desire to show this that Matthew adds that he said: 'Take this and give it for me and you', 'in that day' or 'hour' the disciples came to Jesus saying, 'Who do you think is greater in the kingdom of

⁵² Mt 18:1-6.

heaven?' But perhaps they were also doubtful because in addition three disciples had been made worthier by being taken up into the mountain with him that they might see his transfiguration in his glory, and they had questions about which of those three Christ considered to be better. And the judgement of their understanding was perplexed for several reasons. Sometimes they thought that John might be the better one because he had reclined on the Saviour's breast at the supper and secret plans had been declared to him before the others. And sometimes they thought Peter was the greater 'in the kingdom of heaven' either because of this 'stater' which was given for Christ and Peter, or because of that which Peter said to Jesus in front of the others: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', and Christ said to him: 'Blessed are you Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven; and I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it; and the rest.'⁵³ But again, perhaps they recalled their estimation of Peter because of Christ's statement to him which he had not made to the other disciples: 'Go behind me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me, because you are not savouring the things of God, but those of human beings'; so that Peter, perhaps, was not the greater, but one of the sons of Zebedee. We have made these comments because of the words, 'in that day' or 'hour' when the discourse about the 'stater' occurred.

15 But let us see what it says after this: 'And the disciples came to Jesus' as disciples posing a question to their teacher, 'Who is greater?'⁵⁴ We ought to imitate the disciples of Christ in these matters if ever something is investigated among us as doubtful and is not being solved. We ought, in full agreement, to approach Jesus who is always present wherever 'two or three' have 'gathered' in his name.⁵⁵ He can illuminate the hearts of all who want to learn from him with their whole heart so that they understand the solution of all problems. And it is not out of the question that, following the example of Christ, we ask anyone of those teachers who have been appointed in the churches.

Let us see, then, what the disciples already knew about this question, and of what they were still ignorant. For they knew that the saints are not equal in the kingdom of heaven, and since there is not an equality, one is 'greater' and another less, but they wanted to learn what kind of life made one greater and another less. Perhaps one must say rather cautiously that they knew that someone would, indeed, be least because he himself had taught elsewhere, 'If anyone destroys one of these least commandments and teaches people so, he will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.'⁵⁶ And they knew someone would be greater because he said, 'If anyone shall do and thus teach, he will be called great.'⁵⁷ But it was not clear to them who, out of the many great, might be greater. Furthermore, the expression applied to Isaac, 'who advanced and became great,

⁵³ Mt 16:16-18.⁵⁴ Mt 18:1.⁵⁵ See Mt 18:20.⁵⁶ Mt 5:19.⁵⁷ Ibid.

until he became very, very great' indicates that many are great, but not equally so.⁵⁸ And the same thing has been written in the case of Moses, John the Baptist, and even the Saviour himself.⁵⁹ In all these cases it is undisputed that although they were all great according to the Scriptures, nevertheless, the Saviour was the greater of them. Therefore, because it is said in the case of Isaac that 'he advanced and became great, until he became very, very great' (not simply great, but with the addition of the doubled 'very, very') we can know that there is a difference among the great. One, indeed, is great, and another is very great, and still another is very, very great. Therefore, 'the disciples' were seeking 'who is greater'. Jesus, however, gives a fuller explanation, showing them also how someone becomes 'greater in the kingdom of heaven' by his actions, as the following discourse shows.

16 'And Jesus called a lad and stood him in their midst and said: Truly I say to you, unless you be converted and become as a lad, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this lad will be greater in the kingdom of heaven. And one who shall accept one such lad in my name accepts me.'⁶⁰

First, let us explain the meaning of the teaching in the simple manner. If any adult male shall have continually put to death his masculine desires, 'in the Spirit putting to death his physical acts' and 'always carries around the death of Jesus in his body',⁶¹ as a lad who has not yet experienced the temptation of female charms nor felt masculine impulses, such a man has been converted as a lad. And the more childlike he becomes, withdrawing from impulses of this kind, the more is he held to be 'greater' than others who are restraining their desires but who are not able to ascend to the perfection of continence. And it is appropriate to say the same thing which has been said about small children in view of female passions also in relation to other passions, sicknesses, and infirmities of the soul which no children incur before they begin to reveal a mature faculty of reason. For example, someone, although he is a man, might be converted as a small lad regarding anger, and just as a lad at the time of grief who sometimes laughs and plays at the time of the death of a father or mother or some friend, a man might become such in respect to a childish appearance concerning griefs which are to be disdained by altering them completely with the rational power of his more perfect soul. And you might speak in a comparable way about pleasures by which people who do not belong to God are irrationally excited, pleasures which lads do not experience nor those who have been converted and become 'like lads'. And almost no passion befalls children before they begin to speak, and if there is none, clearly fear does not (unless perhaps it is insignificant and rather transitory compared to the other passions). For children do not experience fear of evils. For example, if someone should

⁵⁸ Gn 26:13.

⁵⁹ See Ex 2:11 (Heb 11:24); Lk 1:15.

⁶⁰ Mt 18:2-5.

⁶¹ See Rom 8:13; 2 Cor 4:10.

threaten a child that it should not crave the breast or cry, it is frightened to be sure, but its fear is not lasting. And if someone should frighten such a child and say, Unless you do this I am going to kill you, or I am going to burn you, or something like that, would a child fear a threat like that? Therefore, just as the other passions are not strong in children, so neither is fear. So too, someone 'will humble himself as the lad'. For nothing causing pride befalls children. They do not boast of birth, or wealth, or of other things that are thought to be good but are not. Whence we frequently see infants up to the age of three or four who happen to be of noble birth behaving like children of ignoble birth and not preferring rich children over poor. If any man, therefore, by means of his reason takes up in himself the condition that children have because of their age and expels those views that move senseless people, he has become humble 'as the lad' not exalting himself with honours, or elating himself with riches, or exalting himself with the splendour of his birth. Such a person as that is to be received and honoured 'in the name of Jesus', because Jesus is in such people in a distinct way. Therefore, he says: 'If anyone receives one such child in my name, he receives me. And it would be better for one who causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble that a millstone be hanged on his neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea.'⁶²

17 It is difficult to explain this in natural succession with what was said previously. For someone will ask, how is he least who has been converted and become 'as a child' and humbled 'himself as the child' that Jesus stood amid the disciples, and capable of being made to stumble, when it is written, 'Those who love your law have much peace, and there is no cause of stumbling for them'?⁶³ Now consider if we can explain this in a reasonable way. Everyone who believes in Jesus as the Son of God and has been converted to live uprightly according to the manner of life described in the Gospels and, after he has been converted, walks as a child, cannot fail to enter 'the kingdom of heaven'. But the person who is not converted that he should become 'as a child' finds it impossible to enter 'the kingdom of heaven'. For many are converted that they should become 'as a child', but not all who are converted that they should become 'as a child' have yet reached the point of becoming like children. Each one falls short of the likeness of children to the extent that he is removed from the condition of a little child in respect to passions of the flesh. In the whole multitude of believers, therefore, there are some who are recent converts to becoming 'like a child'. These, because they have thus been converted to become 'as a child' but have not yet become such but are seen to be recent converts, are considered little ones in Christ. These are small and susceptible to stumbling blocks. We ought not present an occasion for stumbling to these. Otherwise, it is expedient for one who shall have made 'one of the little ones' whom Christ shows believe in him stumble, 'that the millstone of a donkey be hanged on his

⁶² Mt 18:5-6.⁶³ Ps 118:165.

neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea; since this is beneficial to heal his sin. For in this way paying his deserved punishment in the sea (where the 'dragon' is also held which God 'formed to mock'⁶⁴), the person who has been punished, having suffered what is expedient will be exempt from the tribulations in the depth of the sea that he endured, dragged by the millstone of a donkey. For there are also differences between millstones: some are of a human (if I may call them that), and others of a donkey. That is a human one where it is written, 'Two' will be 'grinding at' one 'mill; one will be taken and the other left.'⁶⁵ That is the millstone of a donkey, however, which is placed on the person who causes 'one of those little ones who believe' in Christ to stumble 'so that he may be drowned in the depth of the sea'. And the millstone of a donkey can reasonably be said to be the very heavy body of a wicked person, which is always drawn downward. This is what each sinner receives at the resurrection that he may be drowned in the abyss which is called the depth of the sea.

18 But besides what we said, we introduce another exposition either as a teaching or an exercise. For we ask what 'child Jesus calls and places in the midst' of the disciples. See if we can understand this 'child' to be the Holy Spirit who has humbled himself. Jesus takes this child and places him 'in the midst' of the understanding of the disciples. Therefore, Jesus wants us all to turn from all things and be converted in accordance with the example submitted of the Holy Spirit, that we might become 'as a child'; that is as the apostles, who were, themselves, converted and became like the Holy Spirit who had been placed 'in the midst' of their understanding. God the Father gave these 'children' to Christ, as it is written in Isaiah who says, 'Behold I and the children whom God gave me.'⁶⁶ It is not possible for one to enter the 'kingdom of heaven' who has not turned away from things of this age and become like those children who had the Holy Spirit in them. Jesus calls this Holy Spirit to descend to people from his own perfection, and 'stations' him 'as if he were a child in the midst' of his disciples so that each one might humble himself, not simply 'as a child'; but as it is written, 'as that child'. However, just as one should humble himself because of God, so the Holy Spirit also humbled himself for the sake of the salvation of human beings. And that the Father has sent both Jesus and the Holy Spirit into this world for the sake of human salvation is made clear in Isaiah the prophet who says from the person of the Saviour himself, 'And now the Lord sent me and his Spirit.'⁶⁷ [But since in Greek Holy Spirit is neuter in gender and not masculine as with us, and there are three identical case forms, nominative, accusative, and vocative, for this reason when they translated the word into Latin they translated it as nominative rather than accusative case and said, 'And now the Lord and his Spirit sent me'; although it is more accurate in Greek: 'And now the Lord sent me and his Spirit.'⁶⁸] Nevertheless if

⁶⁴ Job 40:19.⁶⁵ Mt 24:41.⁶⁶ Is 8:18.⁶⁷ Is 48:16.⁶⁸ An obvious insertion by the Latin translator. It appears to be a comment on the Vulgate translation of Is 48:16 which has, 'et nunc Dominus Deus misit me et spiritus eius'.

someone passionately and in contradiction to true reasoning wishes to defend the words, 'And now the Lord and his Spirit sent me', we may, doubtlessly, thus understand the Son of God to have been sent by the Holy Spirit as he was also led by the Holy Spirit into the desert in his human nature.⁶⁹ By taking up human nature Christ has imitated it in all things so that he is even moved by the Holy Spirit as all men of God. He, therefore, who shall have humbled himself in imitation of that child is 'greater in the kingdom of heaven' than all who humble themselves. There are many who wish to humble themselves 'as that child', but the one who shall have become closer than all to that child will be 'greater' than all. We ought, therefore, to receive 'such a child in the name' of Jesus because Jesus dwells in him. And just as one 'who shall have received one such child in' his 'name' receives Jesus, so one who does not wish to receive 'such a child in the name' of Jesus rejects and drives Christ away. He would, of course, be least and susceptible to stumbling because he has not fully imitated the humility of the child.

19 And let us collect sayings of the evangelists related to this section. Perhaps the meaning may become clearer by means of that Holy Spirit whom we said could be understood as 'that child'. Mark says, 'And taking a child, he stood him in the midst of the disciples, and when he had embraced him he said to them, If anyone shall receive one such child in my name.'⁷⁰ But Luke has it as follows: 'And he took a child and put him' not simply 'in their midst', as Matthew and Mark say, but 'with himself', and he said to his disciples' not, 'If anyone shall receive one such child' or 'one of such children', but: 'If anyone shall receive this child in my name.'⁷¹ According to Matthew and Mark, therefore, one could doubt whether that child means the Holy Spirit, because they said: 'If anyone shall receive one such child'. But who doubts that according to Luke that child can be understood as the Holy Spirit, when he says, 'If anyone shall receive this child in my name'? According to Luke, therefore, we ought to receive in the name of Jesus that child whom Jesus took and placed with himself, that is the Holy Spirit, for that child lives as if immortal, and we ought to receive him in the name of Jesus whom Jesus himself has placed with himself. Since Jesus never withdraws from that child, the result is that he is also with him who shall receive the child 'in his name'. And since the Father does not withdraw from the Son, if anyone shall receive the Son, at the same time he also receives the Father with him. And he who receives both the child in the name of Jesus and Jesus in the name of the Father diminishes himself and presents himself as least among all the disciples of Christ. And the more he diminishes himself, the greater he is made by him who gave the command about the diminution of oneself.

20 'Woe to this world because of stumbling blocks. For stumbling blocks must come, but woe to that person through whom a stumbling block comes.'⁷²

⁶⁹ See Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:1.

⁷⁰ Mk 9:36, 37.

⁷¹ Lk 9:47, 48.

⁷² Mt 18:7.

It is worth investigating here what he means by 'world' on which the 'woes' are predicted, and to which all stumbling blocks cause woes. Now we can understand something if we collect examples from the Scriptures in which 'world' is mentioned. I think, therefore, that world is not used in the divine Scriptures of the space of heaven and earth, but it is only this terrestrial place or the people who are the inhabitants of this place. For this is what is meant in the following statement, 'For' that true light 'was in the world', that is, in the place of our earth that we inhabit, 'and the world was made by him', that is the circle of the earth, 'and the world did not know him', that is, the people who are the inhabitants of that earth.⁷³ For it is inconsistent to refer the statement, 'and the world did not know him' to the elements that make up heaven and earth, so that someone might say that the sun, moon, and stars, or the waters, or lands, or angels who are in this whole world did not know that true light, and not knowing it, preserved the order appointed for them by God. For the following statement is also understood in this sense: 'And now Father, glorify me with that honour which I had with you before the world existed. I made your name known to the people whom you gave me from the world.'⁷⁴ And a few lines later, 'I (he says) ask on their behalf, not on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me.'⁷⁵ Likewise after a few lines, 'And they are in the world, and I am coming to you. And I am no longer in the world, and they are in the world.'⁷⁶ Likewise after a few lines, 'And I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world that they may have my joy complete in themselves.'⁷⁷ 'World', therefore, is said either of this earthly place or of the people who are in it. For the Father gives people to the Son from this world, for whom alone the Son asks the Father, and not for all people in the world. For where do we have a greater necessity to be protected by the Father than in the world, of which John says, 'And the entire world has been assigned to the evil one'?⁷⁸ Likewise in the following words, 'That the world might believe that you sent me.'⁷⁹ Therefore, that place and the people who are in it are said to be the world to which there is 'woe because of stumbling blocks'. For there is 'woe because of stumbling blocks' to all people whom stumbling blocks can still conquer. The result is that we should not understand this about the elements of the world.

21 Now if there is 'woe to the world because of stumbling blocks', but the disciples of Jesus are not 'of this world' just as their master is not of the world, the 'woe because of stumbling blocks' cannot apply to any of the disciples of Christ, because 'there is great peace to those who love the name of God, and there is no stumbling block for them.'⁸⁰ If, however, someone appears to be a disciple of Christ but is still 'of the world' because he loves 'the world' and 'the things that are in it' (that is either that life of the flesh, or the possessions of this earth,

⁷³ See Jn 1:9, 10.

⁷⁴ Jn 17:5, 6.

⁷⁵ Jn 17:9.

⁷⁶ Jn 17:11.

⁷⁷ Jn 17:13.

⁷⁸ 1 Jn 5:19.

⁷⁹ Jn 17:21.

⁸⁰ Jn 17:14, 16; Ps 118:165.

or money, or any aspect of it whatsoever) so that the statement made of Jesus' disciples, that 'they are not of the world', is not appropriate for him, without doubt he will possess the 'woes' which customarily befall the world since he is constituted, as it were, 'of the world'. If, then, we wish to avoid this 'woe', let us take up in ourselves the disposition of the apostle Paul who says, 'But God forbid that I glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.'⁸¹ No one, however, who is a lover of physical objects, or beasts of burden, or any very desirable things, or of this physical life can truly say, 'The world has been crucified to me and I to the world.' For the saints who are in this habitation groan in the heavy body of humiliation and do all things that they may be made worthy to be found in that mystery of the resurrection when 'God will transform the body of humiliation', not of all, but only of the faithful disciples of Christ, 'so that it may be like the glorious body of Christ.'⁸² Therefore, just as none of those things from which 'woes' usually touch people touches a disciple of Christ (for even if there are a thousand stumbling blocks, they do not affect the person who is not of this world), so the person who is the recipient of a stumbling block, whether because of his fickle faith or his lack of agreement from his whole heart with the saving commands of Christ so that he no longer appears to be a disciple of Christ, is seized by as many stumbling blocks as he has obligated himself to in the world.

22 'For it is necessary that stumbling blocks come.'⁸³ 'The stumbling blocks' themselves are one thing, but the people by whom the stumbling blocks come are another. Therefore, the stumbling blocks that are to come are the angels of Satan and the wicked chorus of demons who seek worthy organs through whom they may work. For the most part, they find those who are completely unrelated to the worship of God, but occasionally they also find those who appear to be faithful. It turns out that the 'woe' is greater for these by whom the stumbling block comes than for the upright person whom it affects. For the one who causes stumbling will be worse off than the one who is made to stumble, since it is true that there is a difference between punishments according to the statement, 'It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon' than for the cities in which Jesus worked signs and miracles and they were not improved. For if there are 'woes to the world because of stumbling blocks', there is justly a 'woe' for the person who is made to stumble, because when he mingled with the world he voluntarily became the recipient of a stumbling block. The 'woe' will be greater, however, for him 'by whom a stumbling block comes', because he has offered himself to the unclean spirits who cause stumbling, to be a servant for causing weak and worldly people to stumble. And if we gave diligence to understanding these words, 'Woe to him by whom stumbling blocks come' and, 'it is better for him who shall have caused one of these little ones to stumble

⁸¹ Gal 6:14.⁸² Phil 3:21.⁸³ Mt 18:7.

that the millstone of a donkey be bound to his neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea,⁸⁴ because God thus avenges those who shall have been made to stumble from those who shall have caused the stumbling. If we understood these things we would be terrified of ever sinning 'against our brothers' or wounding 'the conscience of those who are weak' for whom 'Christ died'. Because of these brothers we sin 'against Christ as it were', and we will suffer the penalties when the souls among us which have perished because of us shall have been sought out.

23 Next, let us see how we should understand the statement, 'it is necessary that stumbling blocks come.'⁸⁵ For Luke also sets out a similar statement when he says, 'It is impossible that stumbling blocks not come.'⁸⁶ And just as 'it is necessary' that something mortal die and it is impossible that it not die, so too 'it is necessary' that a human being who exists in the body eat, and it is impossible that one who has a physical body live without eating, so 'it is necessary that stumbling blocks come' and 'it is impossible that they not come'. And, as an example, see if you can take the evil which is in the heavenly places⁸⁷ to be joined by necessity to virtues. For it is impossible to discover a human being without any sin at all, who is also able to take up virtues apart from sin, because it is not possible that there be true good if it has not endured the assault of evil. Therefore, just as it is necessary to endure the evil of the heavenly places and it is impossible not to endure it, so 'it is necessary that stumbling blocks come' and 'it is impossible that they not come', especially if you understand the evil of the malignant powers to be the original cause of that evil which is in people, and which is always seeking any instruments by which it may work against people of the world. But perhaps also the irritation of the malignant powers increases, the stronger the word of Christ grows in people and expels the malignant powers which were previously accustomed to dwell in their souls. The demons, too, who delighted in the blood of sacrifices are enraged where their worship is diminishing and the customary sacrifices are not being offered to them. Therefore 'it is necessary that stumbling blocks come'. 'It is necessary that the stumbling blocks' themselves 'come'; it is not necessary, however, that they come by any particular person. The 'woe' will be on the person 'by whom they come' because he gave place in himself to the working of the evil⁸⁸ that wants to cause stumbling. Do not think that the 'stumbling blocks' which seek people through whom they may work exist in some nature or substance. For just as 'God did not make death',⁸⁹ so he did not create stumbling 'blocks'; it is the freedom of their own will that has produced a stumbling block in some who are unwilling to undertake toil on behalf of virtue.

24 'But if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast it from you. For it is better that you enter life maimed or crippled rather than

⁸⁴ Mt 18:6.

⁸⁵ Mt 18:7.

⁸⁶ Lk 17:1.

⁸⁷ See Eph 6:12.

⁸⁸ See Eph 4:27.

⁸⁹ Wis 1:13.

being cast into eternal fire with two hands or two feet. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better that you enter life having one eye than that you be cast into the Gehenna of fire having two eyes.⁹⁰

The Word is teaching us by a parable that we should not spare things that cause us to stumble, whether they are very close to us or even attached to us. When he said above, 'It was said by the ancients, You shall not commit adultery, but I say if anyone looks at a woman to desire her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart,' he added, immediately after these words, 'If your right eye' or 'hand causes you to stumble,' showing that he was speaking of those members which are within us that causes stumbling.⁹¹ For this reason we set forth there that the members that cause stumbling are the desires of the soul. Here, however, when he said, 'Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks, for it is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the one by whom they come' (meaning people, of course), he immediately adds, 'If your hand, or your foot, or your eye causes you to stumble,' showing that he is not speaking about members that are within us that cause stumbling, but about people, outside ourselves, who affect us, so that hands, or feet, or eyes united by the grace of affection are imagined. It is true that some 'stumbling blocks' arise from ourselves, just as James says in his letter, 'God tempts no one, but each one is tempted by his own desires';⁹² and others come from without, whether from strangers or next of kin. The present word speaks of the latter.

It was good indeed that both 'the eye' and 'the hand' were laudable, so that 'the eye' could not justly 'say to the hand, You are unnecessary for me.'⁹³ But if someone from the whole body of the church should be seen as 'hand' because of some activity, but the hand, has changed and caused stumbling, let 'the eye' say to this kind of 'hand, You are unnecessary for me', and when it has said it, let it cut it off and cast it away. In the same way, it is good that the head should be blessed and the feet be worthy of such a head, so that 'the head' cannot justly say 'to the feet, You are unnecessary for me'. And if there should be some foot in the church causing the whole body to stumble, let the head say to such a foot: 'You are unnecessary for me' and, let it cut it off and drive it away. For it is better that the remaining body enter 'into life' without the member that causes the stumbling, than the whole body of the church 'be sent into Gehenna' because the plague of the stumbling block rushes through the whole. So too, it was good that he who was made an 'eye' be worthy of Christ, the head, and of the whole body of the church. But if that eye has changed and should be a stumbling block for the whole body, let the 'eye' causing stumbling be cast out and banished beyond the whole body, so that the remaining body may be saved without that eye rather than the whole church with that weak eye 'be cast into Gehenna', which is shrouded in darkness, of course, because of the evil eye. And the apostle, not I, understood Christ to be the head of the church. And the

⁹⁰ Mt 18:8-9.

⁹¹ See Mt 5:27-30.

⁹² See James 1:13, 14.

⁹³ 1 Cor 12:21.

priests can reasonably be called the eye of the church since they are held to be guardians; the deacons and other ministers, however, are the hands since they perform all the spiritual works; and the people are the feet of the church. One must not spare any of these if they have become a stumbling block to the church.

25 But we can also use this text of our family members who are so joined to us by love as if they were members of our body. No matter whether they be parents or friends with a certain intimacy of love, we must not spare them when they are harmful to our soul. Let us, therefore, cut off from ourselves, as if they were a hand, or foot, or eye, a father or mother who wants us to act contrary to piety, or a son or daughter who (so far as they are able) makes us withdraw from the church of God and from the love of Christ. But also, if a wife of our bosom, or friends who share our mind shall have become stumbling blocks to us let us cut them off and cast them away from our soul as if they were not friends, but adversaries of our salvation. For one who 'does not hate father and mother' and what follows, when it is the time to hate them as if they were adversaries and ambushers, in order that we may gain Christ, is not worthy of the Son of God.⁹⁴ And it is possible to say in relation to these words that some cripple is saved who has lost a foot, that is a brother, and inherits the kingdom of God alone and is saved; and someone without a hand is saved, who loses father or mother so that when they perish he may be saved alone; so too, someone without an eye is saved, cutting his eye out, that is his wife who is committing fornication, so that with such an eye he not, having two eyes, enter into the fire. But it can also be understood as follows: the active part of the soul that sins is understood to be a hand, and the moving part of the soul a foot, and the visual aspect of the soul that sins an eye. These must be cut out if they cause stumbling. Frequently in Scripture the works themselves of our members are put for the members such as the words, 'And I lift my hands to your commandments', for we do not lift our hands themselves, but the works of our hands to the commandments of God when we do works worthy of God.⁹⁵ And again, 'I lifted my eyes to you' meaning not the eyes, but the mind that sees through the eyes.⁹⁶ Likewise, 'I turned my feet to your testimonies', meaning not that the feet, but the movements of the soul are turned to the testimony of God when we shall have begun to want to be turned towards God. All of these powers, that is vision, action, or movement, must be cut off if they become evil, so that we may 'enter into life' without them, not doing what we want, so that we not enter into the fire doing our own wills. And first it is a blessed thing to abstain from every stumbling block so that no power of the soul be caught in evil but we might use them all in good. For in this way we shall enter eternal life with two feet, and two hands, and two eyes of the soul and the body. And if it shall be that by using badly some power of the soul we perish because of it, it is better

⁹⁴ See Lk 14:26; Phil 3:8.

⁹⁵ Ps 118:48.

⁹⁶ Ps 122:1.

to cut it off, that is to thrust away the use of that power which causes stumbling rather than perish completely with the remaining powers.

26 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.'⁹⁷

First, let us see who the little ones are whom we must not despise. Now I think that just as there are differences among human bodies, some being small, others large, and others of medium size, so among souls some are small, but others are large according to the spiritual measurement that God alone sees and judges. In bodies, however, it is not the fault of humans but the result of certain principles in the seed that one is short, another tall, and another of medium height. In souls, on the other hand, it is in our power to be someone either small, great, or mediocre, either because of our works, our faith, or some other passions, and it is a matter of our will if we want to increase in stature of soul and become great, or not to increase and remain small. So I understand also in relation to Christ when he takes up human nature and increases in relation to natural growth processes, as it is written, 'And Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and grace before God and people'⁹⁸ based on which the apostle says subsequently, 'Until we all attain perfect adulthood in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'⁹⁹ Attaining adulthood, and this perfect, is to be understood 'in the inner person' who has passed beyond 'the things of a child' and, putting them away, has arrived at 'perfect adulthood'.¹⁰⁰ In this way the measure of the spiritual stature is to be understood to be in individual souls, by which each soul increases and, because it magnifies God, is magnified by God.

Isaac and Moses are said to have been great in relation to this greatness of spiritual stature and spiritual increase, as also John and the Lord Jesus himself of whom Gabriel testified in advance, 'And he will be great'.¹⁰¹ But those who are newly born in Christ are small, or those who remain such without growth as if they were newly born, for whom spiritual milk is necessary, who still belong to the flesh, as the apostle says, and are little ones in Christ incapable of taking adult food.¹⁰² For although little ones are heirs, nevertheless, because they are little they are no different from slaves (as long as they are little), and 'have a spirit of slavery in fear'. The person, however, who by the perfect love of God has cast 'out fear', no longer has 'a spirit of slavery in fear, but the spirit of adoption of sons' in the love of God.¹⁰³

27 Likewise, you will ask when the care of those 'angels of the little ones' who preside over them begins. Is it from the time when they are born in Christ through the washing of regeneration, 'as if newborn infants' and afterwards are

⁹⁷ Mt 18:10.

⁹⁸ Lk 2:52.

⁹⁹ Eph 4:13.

¹⁰⁰ See Rom 7:22; 1 Cor 13:11.

¹⁰¹ Lk 1:32; for Isaac, Moses, and John see ch. 15 above.

¹⁰² See 1 Pet 2:2; 1 Cor 3:1, 2.

¹⁰³ See Rom 8:14; 1 Jn 4:18.

not subject to any hostile power?¹⁰⁴ Or, does it begin from the time of their birth in the flesh in accordance with the foreknowledge of God and his pre-election ***¹⁰⁵ of those 'whom he foreknew and predestined that they be conformed to the glory' of Christ.¹⁰⁶ You see that the one who will discuss carefully whether to affirm the view of these or those as true, also cites Scripture as testimony which agrees with one of the two views, for the argument can become extensive on both sides. Nevertheless, we offer a very small sample from the abundance. Those who want a person (of those who have been foreknown by God) who shall have just been born to receive that angel put in charge of him use the word of the apostle when he says, 'He who set me apart from my mother's womb that he might reveal his Son to me', as if from that moment it was necessary that the angel who set him apart in accord with the foreknowledge of God rule him.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, in the Epistle of Jude it is written: 'To those who are loved in God the Father and who are preserved and called in Jesus Christ'.¹⁰⁸ By whom were those had been foreknown and predestined preserved if not by the angels to whom they were delivered that they might be preserved and delivered from every evil? Likewise, he will bring forward also that which is said in the Psalms, 'You are my protector from my mother's womb', that God, through the angels allotted to this very ministry, might be the protector of those who are foreknown.¹⁰⁹ So too he will take that statement, 'You received me from my mother's womb', likewise, 'On you I have been cast from the womb', and a thousand other passages that have a meaning like this.¹¹⁰

28 And the person who wants the angelic helper to be given to people at the time when they are born 'through the washing of regeneration'¹¹¹ and have become 'infants in Christ'¹¹² will say that it is not credible that a holy angel is in charge of those who are irrational, unbelieving, erring, serving desires that are diverse and impure, living in wickedness and envy, odious and hating one another, fornicators and adulterers, and occasionally even bed-fellows of men, thieves, drunks, and avaricious, so that the one to whom the guardian is given is defiled with the actions of people of this kind.¹¹³ Rather, in the time of one's infidelity and sins one is a human being born of infidelity under the angels of Satan, malignant spirits, and unclean demons. But when a person shall have accepted the faith, then Christ, who is the redeemer and redeemed him from the malignant lords with the price of his own blood, delivers the person believing in God to an angel who is holy and always sees the 'face of the Father' because of his purity.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁴ See 1 Pet 2:2.

¹⁰⁵ Diehl suggests comparing the Greek which has 'were set over' here. I have supplied 'of those'.

¹⁰⁶ Rom 8:29.

¹⁰⁷ Gal 1:15, 16.

¹⁰⁸ Jude 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ps 70:6.

¹¹⁰ Ps 138:13; 21:11.

¹¹¹ See Tit 3:5.

¹¹² See 1 Cor 3:1.

¹¹³ See 1 Cor 6:9, 10.

¹¹⁴ See 1 Pt 1:18, 19; Mt 19:10.

It is appropriate to say regarding what we have explained about the little disciples, that Christ had no need to give a command that the great and perfect faithful were not to be despised but only that 'the little ones' were not to be. Therefore, he did not say simply, You shall not despise one of all these disciples that you see, but 'one of these little ones', whom he who could see the smallness and greatness of souls that is invisible knew to be little. We have also said such things above on the statement, 'If anyone shall have caused one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble.'¹¹⁵

29 Another, however, will perhaps say that little is said here of the person who is perfect according to the statement found elsewhere: 'But he who shall be little among all of you will be great.'¹¹⁶ For the one who humbles himself in the midst of all who believe (whether he be an apostle or a bishop), becoming an imitator of him who humbled himself for human salvation, is the little one Christ indicates. Paul also shows himself to be such a little one when he says, 'To me, the least of all the saints, this grace was given'¹¹⁷ But the words, 'If anyone shall cause one of these little ones to stumble', and other statements do not appear to agree with an explanation of this kind, nor do the following words, 'So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish',¹¹⁸ since such a little one who truly is perfect would neither be made to stumble nor perish, 'for there is great peace to those who love God's law, and there is no stumbling block for them.'¹¹⁹ And since a little one of this kind will not perish, he can say: 'Who will separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?' and the words that follow, and, 'I believe neither death nor life' and the words that follow.¹²⁰ But the one who considers this exposition to be true will say that even the soul of a just person is capable of change, and may be made to stumble at some time, even if not easily, just as Ezekiel testifies when he says that even a just person can withdraw from the commandments of God so that his prior justice is not imputed to him. For this reason, he says: 'If anyone shall cause one of these little ones to stumble,' and that 'it is not the will of my Father that one of these little ones perish.'¹²¹ But which explanation is more likely true you will decide as you are able. Next, follows this parable about the hundred sheep, one of which wanders off and, in like manner, is found. We treated this as we were able when we were expounding the Gospel according to Luke, since he too mentions this parable.¹²² So that we not, therefore, appear to be repetitive, we pass over it here and refer you to our exposition of the Gospel according to Luke to know its whole meaning, and in what way we understood that parable.¹²³

30 'But if your brother sin go and correct him between you and him alone. If he shall hear you, you have gained your brother, but if he shall not hear you,

¹¹⁵ Mt 18:6.

¹¹⁶ Lk 9:48.

¹¹⁷ Eph 3:8.

¹¹⁸ Mt 18:14.

¹¹⁹ Ps 118:165.

¹²⁰ Rom 8:38.

¹²¹ Mt 18:6, 14.

¹²² See Lk 15:4-7.

¹²³ Origen's treatment of this parable in Luke is not extant.

take one or two further with you so that every word may stand in the mouth of two or three witnesses. And if he shall not hear them, tell the church. And if he shall not hear the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and tax-collector.¹²⁴

Let us see whether this sentiment has perhaps not been asserted of just any kind of sin. If someone called a brother has committed one of those sins which are to death,¹²⁵ such as, for example, becoming a bed-partner of males, or an adulterer, or a murderer, or effeminate, is it reasonable to accuse such a person one to one in the same way as you would accuse someone who commits little sins? And if the one who has committed such sins as these shall listen, is it reasonable to say immediately that he has been won over, and if he shall not listen, for him not to be banished from the church unless he shall have persisted in his prior action after having been accused both before witnesses and by the church? On the other hand, we must not be unaware that another who follows the words themselves and looks to the immeasurable mercy of Christ can say that since Christ's own words indicate no difference between sins, those who mark these words as pertaining only to minor sins do something superfluous and contrary to the mercy of Christ. But I do not think that the person who thinks this way has the public advantage in mind. Another, considering the same words carefully and wishing to supply nothing from outside the text will not defend what is said of every sin, because one who commits those greater sins is not a brother even if he is called a brother, for there is a difference between a brother and one who is called a brother. And because they are different from oneself, the apostle says, 'If someone among you is called a brother, but is a fornicator, or is greedy, or is a worshipper of idols (and the other things) with such do not even eat.'¹²⁶ For no one who is a worshipper of idols, or is a fornicator, or is greedy is a brother. He is not a brother in the proper sense even if he carries the name of Christ and is called a brother. Therefore, just as by his estimation of the strong mercy of Christ the person who explains that this statement applies in general to every sin gives occasion to the negligent to sin, so, on the contrary, the one who distinguishes a brother from a brother in name teaches that someone who commits one of the least sins among humans even after the censure of witnesses or the church ought to become as a tax-collector and Gentile for sins that are not 'to death', or (as the law calls them in Numbers), not death-bearing.¹²⁷ This seems to introduce something harsh. For I do not think that someone may easily be found in the church who has not already been censured three times for the same fault, as for example, for slander (by which people repeatedly slander their neighbours), or for pride, or gluttony, or for a false or idle word, or for any such minor fault which is frequently found even in those who are advancing in the church.

Consider, then, whether perhaps the understanding of the passage escapes both those who, by their estimation of the immense mercy of Christ interpret

¹²⁴ Mt 18:15-17.

¹²⁵ See 1 Jn 5:16.

¹²⁶ 1 Cor 5:11.

¹²⁷ Num 18:22.

these words to apply also to the greater sins, and those who claim that these words apply to minor sins and think that the one who commits minor sins (if he has not changed his ways after being censured two or three times) immediately becomes as a Gentile and a tax-collector. What then? The person who has been censured three times shall become as a Gentile and tax-collector to the person who censures him; whether he is completely regained, or perishes utterly, or suffers something else, God knows. We, however, are not able to make a pronouncement because of what is written: 'Judge not, that you be not judged,' and likewise: 'Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes who will illuminate the secret places of darkness and make the counsels of hearts manifest'.¹²⁸

First, since it is permitted to him who has been censured three times without obeying to hear a fourth time, so that he not immediately be 'as a Gentile and a tax-collector', we ought to be mindful of that which is said, 'So it is not the will of my Father that one of these little ones should perish'.¹²⁹ If in fact 'we must all be presented before the tribunal of Christ that each one may obtain the proper things of the body according to what he has done, whether good or evil', it is written in turn, 'It will happen to you according to the works of your hands',¹³⁰ and sinners will get their sins back from the hand of the Lord not multiple times, but either twofold or sevenfold. Sometimes a person is not repaid 'according to the works of his hands', but more than he sinned, for 'Jerusalem', as Isaiah taught, 'will receive her sins back doubled from the hand of the Lord', but the neighbours of Israel (whoever they are) will receive them seven times, according to what is said in the Psalm, 'Repay our neighbours seven times into their bosoms'.¹³¹ Other means of repayment are also discovered which, if we understood them, we would know that it is advantageous to receive our punishment in this world. And finally note that it is not correct to say, 'He shall be as a Gentile and a tax-collector', but, 'to you'. The person, therefore, who has been reproached for a minor sin three times (as we explained it) and does not change his ways, we then ought to treat him as a tax-collector and Gentile, avoiding him that he might be put to shame. But whether God considers him as a tax-collector and Gentile is not ours to pronounce, but is in the judgement of God.

31 And he has appropriately applied to someone who after three reproaches has become as a tax-collector and a Gentile: 'Whatever you shall bind on earth will be bound also in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth, will be loosed also in heaven'.¹³² For he who has reproached someone three times and has not been heeded, justly binds him who has become as a tax-collector and a Gentile. For this reason, such a person who has been bound and condemned has been bound by all who are in heaven. So too, if once reproached he changed

¹²⁸ Mt 7:1; 1 Cor 4:5.

¹²⁹ Mt 18:14.

¹³⁰ Is 3:11.

¹³¹ Is 40:2; Ps 78:12.

¹³² Mt 18:1, 8.

his ways so that he is no longer bound 'by the ropes of' his own 'sins,' he has been justly loosed also by those who are in heaven. Nevertheless, those powers which above were given to Peter alone appear also to be given to all those who reproach sinners three times if they have not been heeded, and these people have bound on earth by judging the sinner as a tax-collector and Gentile. But since it was necessary that Peter have something more than those who reproach someone three times, therefore it is said to him in the following way: 'And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you shall loose on earth will be loosed also in the heavens, and whatever you shall bind on earth will be bound also in the heavens.'¹³³ It is no small difference, then, that Peter was given 'the keys' not of one heaven, but of many 'heavens,' so that whatever things he will have bound 'on earth' will have been bound not only in one heaven, but in all the 'heavens,' and what he will have loosed 'on earth' will have been loosed not only in one heaven, but in all the 'heavens.' To those many, however, who are binders and releasers 'on earth' he says that they loose and bind, not in 'the heavens,' as Peter, but in one 'heaven' because they are not so perfect as Peter that they may bind or loose in all the 'heavens.' By how much better, therefore, he shall be who binds, by so much is he who is bound, bound more than in one heaven; and by how much better he shall be who looses, by so much better will he be who is loosed since he has been loosed in all the heavens.

¹³³ Mt 16:19.

Book 14 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 18:19–19:11

1 'Truly I say to you again that if two of you agree on earth about anything, whatever they ask will come about for them from my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three shall have gathered in my name, I am there in their midst'.¹

First of all let us see judiciously if that agreement can exist among many or in a total assembly, so that Christ should be 'in their midst', since 'the way is narrow and constricted that leads to life, and they are few who find it'.² But perhaps with an agreement of this kind not even a few agree on all things among themselves, but 'two' perhaps 'or three', such as Peter, James, and John, to whom, since they agree on nearly all things, the Word of God showed his glory by transforming himself into his glory so that his clothing would appear to them shining 'like light' since 'he had no form or beauty'.³ And the two, Paul and Sosthenes, were in agreement when they wrote the first letter to the Corinthians; likewise Paul and Timothy when they sent the second. And when Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy wrote to the Thessalonians, three were in agreement so that Christ was 'in their midst'. Likewise, in the Old Testament 'three' are found agreeing 'on earth' so that the Word of God was 'in their midst', as the superscription of the forty-first Psalm shows containing the following words, 'to the end, in agreement with the sons of Kore',⁴ since there are three sons of Kore whose names are known in Exodus: Asir, which means 'instruction', second, Elkanah which means 'creature of God', third, Abiasaph which means 'gathering of the father'.⁵ Their prophecies, therefore, are not divided, but have been dictated and written, in co-operating agreement, of course, from one spirit, soul, and voice, as it were, and the three have said, as if they were one, 'As a stag longs for fountains of water, so my soul longs for you,

¹ Mt 18:19–20.

² Mt 7:14.

³ See Mt 17:2; Is 53:2.

⁴ See Ps 41:1.

⁵ See Ex 6:24.

O God'. But they also spoke in the plural in the forty-third Psalm: 'O God, we have heard with our ears'.⁶

Therefore, the apostle also commanded saying, 'That you may be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgement'.⁷ And in the Acts, it says of those in agreement, 'And the heart and soul of the believers was one',⁸ since they had become one, if, notwithstanding, it is possible (as we said) to find in a multitude those holding the same opinion on all things so that there is not even a modicum of dissension among them. The Corinthians, however, were not in agreement when they said: 'I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, but I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ'. There were schisms, and they were gathered with the spirit of Paul and 'the power of the Lord Jesus' to solve them so that they might no longer bite and devour one another and be consumed 'by one another'.⁹ For just as agreement unites, so disagreement devours and separates people from Jesus who is found only in the midst of those who agree among themselves. And it is appropriate indeed that in those two general points agreement occur: in faith, as the apostle says, 'That you may be perfect in the same mind', that is, in relation to the same doctrines, 'and in the same judgement', that is, that their manner of life be similar.¹⁰ Therefore, he says, 'If two of you agree on earth about anything, whatever they ask will come about for them'.

It is clear, however, that where there is no agreement 'about anything', also 'two' do not agree 'on earth'. And because we are not in agreement among ourselves in all things 'on earth', either in doctrine or manner of life, that is why those who pray are not heard. But still, if we are the body of Christ, and 'God placed individual members in the body' that the members might mutually hold the same views and be in harmony, and be caring, and when one member suffers all might suffer together, and when one is glorified, all might rejoice together, we ought to preserve that musical harmony. Just as it does not please the listener if there is no harmony of voices among the musicians, so also if the church does not have harmony God is not pleased with it nor does he listen to their voices. Let us agree, therefore, so that when we gather 'in the name' of Jesus, Jesus may be 'in' our 'midst', meaning the Word of God, of course, along with his wisdom and power.¹¹

2 There is another explanation of those words that some predecessor proposed exhorting married people to chastity. If 'two of you' (he said) 'shall agree', that is husband and wife, and separate themselves by agreement from physical union with one another that they might have time 'for prayer', then indeed they will obtain 'anything at all that they seek' when they pray since God is present with them because of such harmony of chastity. And that agreement is not seen to dissolve the marriage, but to exercise the virtue of continence. But if one should wish to act chastely and the other not, or should not be able, and

⁶ Ps 41:2; 43:2.

⁷ 1 Cor 1:10.

⁸ Acts 4:32.

⁹ 1 Cor 1:12; see 1:10; 5:4; Gal 5:15.

¹⁰ 1 Cor 1:10.

¹¹ See Jn 1:1; 1 Cor 1:24.

for this reason the better one who wishes and is able should condescend to the one not wishing or not being able, this person will not be in the company of those to whom it is said, 'Whatever they ask about anything will come about for them.'

3 I also know another explanation. Among evil people sin dominates the carnal soul to be obedient to its desires. But in those who have expelled from the throne of their body, as it were, the sin that previously reigned in them, and struggle against it, 'the flesh indeed lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.'¹² But in perfect people the spirit prevails and puts to death the works of the flesh and bestows its life on the flesh in order to make their 'mortal bodies' alive 'because of the spirit that dwells in' them.¹³ There then occurs an agreement 'of two' (spirit and flesh) 'on earth', and when this agreement has been completed and prayer is offered from 'a heart' that believes 'unto justice, and a mouth' that confesses 'to salvation' so that the heart is no longer far from God, but is with him and approaches him with the lips; in this way 'two' come to be gathered 'in the name' of Jesus.¹⁴ But it is even more blessed if 'three' come together 'in the name' of Jesus, so that the wish of the apostle is fulfilled: 'And may God sanctify you to perfection, and may your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved without blemish in the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ'.¹⁵ But it can happen that two come together without a third.

4 It is also pleasing, however, to understand that harmony in regard to the agreement of the two testaments. For in proportion as the two testaments agree with one another so that there is no disagreement between them, prayer about everything is found to be acceptable to God. But if you also require a third one who brings the two together, do not be ashamed to say that it is the Holy Spirit, since 'the words of the wise' (whether they are prior to the advent, or in the advent itself, or after it) are 'as goads', 'as implanted nails', 'given from one shepherd'.¹⁶ For just as a goad compels two wrangling oxen to become one, so also the word of the wise restores agreement in respect to the two testaments even if disagreement is perceived in certain places by those who cannot grasp the depth of their agreement. Do not pass over the fact that he did not say, I will be 'in their midst', but, 'I am in their midst'. Therefore, he will not be 'in the midst', nor will he delay being 'in the midst', but directly, as they agree, Christ is found among them because Christ himself is agreement.

5 'Then Peter approached and said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus says to him, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven.'¹⁷

What is considered to have been said simply by Peter, as if he reckons to forgive a brother who commits seven sins against him, but by no means eight,

¹² Gal 5:17.

¹³ See Rom 8:13, 11.

¹⁴ See Rom 10:10.

¹⁵ See 1 Thess 5:23.

¹⁶ Eccles 12:11.

¹⁷ Mt 18:21-2.

and by the Saviour as if he teaches that one needs to forgive a neighbour not only for seven sins against himself but also for seventy-seven, but after seventy-seven no longer to forgive the brother, seems to me exceedingly contemptible and unworthy both so far as Peter's growth in Christ is concerned, and so far as the preeminence of Christ's understanding is concerned. Might these words too, therefore, perhaps mean something similar to those which are spoken in Genesis: 'Hear my words, wives of Lamech, because I killed a man for wounding me, and a youth for bruising me; because there is a sevenfold revenge of Cain, but seventy-seven of Lamech'?¹⁸

Six, therefore, appears to be a number of work and labour, but seven of rest. And see if you can understand him who loves 'the world' and the things that are in the world¹⁹ working and doing the things of the present world and say that he sins six times and the number seven is the end of sins for him. Peter, then, understood something like this when he thought he would grant his neighbour seven sins against himself. But since ten and a hundred contain a common expression with the number which is in the unit, and Christ knew that some continue their sins even further, for this reason I think Christ added seventy also next to seven times, in order to say that there ought to be remission for brothers living in this world and who sin in relation to the things of this world, but if someone surpasses those sins which customarily occur in mundane things and things of this world, and shall sin (if this is even possible), he will no longer have a rightful remission of his sins. Remission has a place in those things and is rightfully at hand in relation to those sins, whether it occurs slowly or quickly. There is, therefore, no remission for a brother who sins beyond the seventy-seven. And consider (if you can), also in the nature of all sins wherever and whenever committed or potentially committed, since there is a difference which has some connection with numbers, in what way you might say that the worst of all sins are those which exceed the number seventy-seven, since Jesus did not counsel Peter to remit sins beyond that number even if they are committed against him by a brother. And furthermore consider (if you can) in relation to those things that we have passed on about Peter, against whom the gates of the underworld will not prevail, and understand him here so that someone may sin against Peter as it were, who has sinned in such a way as Peter, and from the perspective of sins of this kind he is in a lesser number of sins, but from the perspective of worse sins he is in a number which has no forgiveness of sins.

6 'Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of heaven is like a king, who wished to make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to make a reckoning, one was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents. And when he did not have whence he might pay it back, his lord ordered him to be sold and his wife, and sons, and all that he had and the debt to be repaid. That servant,

¹⁸ Gn 4:23.

¹⁹ See 1 Jn 2:15.

therefore, falling prostrate begged him saying, Have patience with me, and I will repay everything. And his lord had mercy on that servant and dismissed him and cancelled his whole debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred denarii, and taking him, he choked him saying, Pay back what you owe me. Therefore, his fellow servant fell prostrate at his feet and asked him saying, Have patience with me, and I will repay everything to you. But he was not willing, but he departed and sent him to prison until he should repay the debt. But his fellow servants saw what happened and were very grieved and coming, they reported to their lord all that had happened. Then his lord calls him and says to him: Wicked servant. I forgave you the whole debt because you asked me. Therefore, ought you not also to have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you? And his lord was angry and delivered him to the torturers, until he should repay the whole debt. So also, my Father in heaven will do to you if you do not each one forgive people from your hearts.²⁰

The intention of the parable is to teach us to be quick to be indulgent to those who have wronged us, especially if after they have wronged us they make amends for their harmful actions against us and pray that grace be given them for their offences. It also instructs us that even after their forgiveness God will recall those sins which he has now forgiven us if we shall not forgive from the heart in the same way those who offend us that not the slightest memory of their offences remains with us. After this intention of the parable it is possible to discuss the whole parable straightforwardly word by word, so that someone who inquires diligently of the individual words might profit from the discussion of the words alone. There is also a more sublime and mysterious explanation about which it is possible to inquire of the account: Who is the king, and who are the servants, and what is the beginning of making 'a reckoning with the servants'? And, Who is 'the debtor of many talents', and who is his wife, and who are his sons, and what are 'all his things' that the king 'commanded to be sold' so that the debt 'might be repaid' from his goods? What does it mean that he who received the forgiveness of many talents went out, or who is that one 'fellow servant' who does not belong to the householder, but was in debt to the servant who has obtained the forgiveness of his debts, and what does the number 'one hundred' denarii wish to convey in itself? And what does it mean to choke and say, 'Pay back what you owe'? And what is that 'prison' in which he who had obtained the indulgence of many talents 'went off' and 'thrust' his fellow servant? And who are 'the fellow servants' who are saddened and report to the 'lord everything that happened'? And who are the torturers to whom that man is handed over who 'thrust' his fellow servant 'into prison'? And how did the servant handed over 'to the torturers' pay back 'everything that he

²⁰ Mt 18:23-35.

owed', so that he now owed nothing? At any rate now let us take up the exposition set forth.

7 'The kingdom of heaven (he says) is like a king'. If the 'kingdom of heaven' is compared to some king, let us see, in the first place, what this 'kingdom of heaven' itself is which is compared to a king if it is not the Son of God. For he himself is the 'kingdom of heaven'. Just as he himself is wisdom, justice, and truth,²¹ so he himself is the kingdom, and the kingdom does not belong to any of those who are below or to some of those who are considered to be above, but belongs to all who are above, who have been designated heaven. In relation to this you can say that Christ is theirs, who reigns daily in their thoughts, just as justice, wisdom, truth, and the other virtues are reigning in the person who has become heaven, because he bears 'the image of the heavenly man'.²² When this 'kingdom of heaven', therefore, was made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that being of sin he might condemn sin', then he became 'like a king', uniting him with himself and in all things making him one with himself. In this mystery of the man who has been assumed, he becomes Jesus Christ since 'he who joins himself to the Lord becomes one spirit with him'.²³ In respect to this 'kingdom of heaven', therefore, that is likened 'to a king' and has become one with him, it is said in anticipation that 'he wished to make a reckoning with his servants'. For he has not yet made it, but he will make it so that it might be clear how each one has used his lord's credible silver coins and rational money. Some, indeed, receive more of this and others less. For in relation to the ability of each one some are given 'five talents' as if to one strong enough to manage so much, 'and' others 'two' as if to one less capable, 'and' others 'one' as if to one still weaker. And if anyone examines closely the variety of human souls and the abilities among them which differ greatly, that this one is fit for many excellences but that one for fewer; one is suited for these, but not for those, perhaps he can understand how each soul comes into this world with certain riches belonging to the Lord.

8 But you will ask in addition whether all people are servants of this king or some are servants 'whom he foreknew and predestined'²⁴ but others are not servants but are people who do business with the servants. Of these latter, it is also said to a certain servant, 'Should you not have given my money to the bank so that when I come I might receive it back with interest?'²⁵ And thus you will inquire whether some, not only who are alien to the faith but even some of the believers, are considered in addition to the servants from whom the lord predicts he will receive with interest, and these servants alone (so far as these parables are concerned) who are disbursers of the word are being considered. It is these to whom it has been committed that they should do business and

²¹ See 1 Cor 1:30; Jn 14:6.

²² 1 Cor 15:49.

²³ 1 Cor 6:17.

²⁴ See Rom 8:29.

²⁵ See Mt 25:27.

increase, for it does not follow that he said to all, 'Do business until I return'.²⁶ And it follows that when he shall make a reckoning with the servants, it is also asked what the servants have done in reference to those who are outside the king's household. For no fellow servant is found of that manager of iniquity who owed 'a hundred bushels of wheat' or 'a hundred gallons of olive oil'.²⁷ On this point the manager himself makes it clear when he says, 'How much do you owe my lord?'²⁸ He did not say, 'our lord'. Now understand with me that every good action is said to be a profit, but a bad one a loss. And just as there is a difference between a loss and a loss of money, so also in good deeds there is a difference between a good deed and good, and in the same way there is a difference between an evil deed and evil. God alone knows these differences. He is able to examine such things and sees from the intention itself of the words and actions what appears to be in our power but is not, and what deed is a large profit, or what is mediocre, or paltry. He also knows, on the contrary, what sin is found to be a great loss (when the reason is considered) or what is minimal, or what is the penalty of the last penny. A reckoning, therefore, of our whole life is to be made by the king when 'we must all be presented before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may obtain the proper things of the body, whether good or evil'.²⁹ 'Ever idle word that people shall have spoken' will also be brought to this reckoning, or if anyone has ever given any one a 'cup of cold water' to drink 'in the name of a disciple only'.³⁰

9 But we do not think that these things are said in this way as if much time is needed to make a reckoning with us of all the actions of our life, as one might conjecture a king making a reckoning with a great a multitude of servants, lest the reckoning require a long time, lasting until everything done by everyone from the beginning of the world to the consummation of not one age but many reach the end. But it is not this way. When God wants to examine the minds of all people (so that each one might perceive his own good actions or evil) by some ineffable power he will bring to pass immediately in the mind everything every single individual in all time has done. For it is not like us when we want to present mentally the things that someone has done and need sufficient time to recall them and put them in words. God does not need time when he wishes to bring to our minds everything we have done in life so that by becoming aware of what we have done we might understand why we are punished or honoured. And if someone does not believe the speed of the divine power in respect to the completion of all these things, this person has not yet understood God who made all things and did not need the space of any time for creating heaven and earth and all things in them. For even if God appears to have made all things in six days, especially because it says, 'This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth, on which day heaven and earth were made'³¹ nevertheless,

²⁶ Lk 19:13.

²⁷ See Lk 16:6, 7.

²⁸ Lk 16:5.

²⁹ 2 Cor 5:10.

³⁰ Mt 12:36; 10:42.

³¹ Gen 2:4.

one must be daring and say that the time of the future judgement will have no need of spatial time, but just as the future resurrection is referred to as 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,'³² so I think also the judgement will be.

10 Next let us say what the words mean: 'When he began to make a reckoning one who owed many talents was brought to him.'³³

The beginning of judgement begins from the house of God, who (as it is written in Ezekiel) said to the angels who had been appointed over punishments: 'Begin from my holy places.'³⁴ This beginning is like 'the twinkling of an eye', because in the twinkling of an eye he considers the acts of all the saints and judges them. So too will be the time of reckoning for punishing, which is perceived in the mind. For we have not forgotten what was said above about those owing much for which reason it is not written, and when 'he made a reckoning', but: 'when he began to make a reckoning (at the beginning of making a reckoning) one who owed many talents was brought to him' who had lost many thousand talents. Many talents had been allotted to him, and although he had been entrusted with many talents he had brought no gain to the lord, with the result that he has become one 'who owes many talents'. Perhaps he became one who 'owed many talents' because he followed the woman sitting on the talent of lead whose name is Iniquity.³⁵ Understand, moreover, that each great sin is said to be a talent of loss to the lord, sins such as fornicators commit, adulterers, effeminate, men who sleep with men, idolaters, murderers, since that man who 'was brought to the king' also had committed no small sin. All his sins were great and very bad. Perhaps he lost as many talents as the men lost who received him who committed such sins among themselves; 'for humanity is great and a merciful man is honourable.'³⁶ He is honourable as an approved talent, whether of gold (such as that lamp of pure gold³⁷) or a silver talent, or of any other credible metal whatsoever. The mysteries of these things have been written in the Words of the Days, inasmuch as David too had been enriched with many talents, whose number also is shown in so many talents of gold, and so many of silver, and of the remaining metals which are named there, from which the temple of God was constructed.³⁸

11 'And when he did not have whence he might repay it, he ordered him to be sold along with his wife and his sons and all his possessions and the debt to be repaid.'³⁹

It is necessary, therefore, to say who, so far as the intention of Christ is concerned, is 'the man who owes many talents', and who is his wife, and who his sons, and 'all' his possessions, and who is the debtor who owes that debtor himself, and who are the 'fellow servants who see' this man choking him and that man being choked. And so it is; truly I confess that no one but Christ

³² 1 Cor 15:52.

³⁶ Prv 20:6.

³³ Mt 18:24.

³⁷ See Ex 25:39.

³⁴ Ez 9:6; see 1 Pet 4:17.

³⁸ See 1 Chron 22:14.

³⁵ See Zach 5:7.

³⁹ Mt 18:25.

alone can explain it, who 'explains all things in private to his disciples'⁴⁰ entering their understanding and opening to them the obscure, secret, and unseen treasures of the parables, and establishing him with unquestionable proofs whom he wished to enlighten with the light of knowledge so that he might understand all things in this parable.

This man could be either the devil, or 'the man of sin',⁴¹ or neither of them, or some other man, or someone of those who are under the devil. For this is the task of the wisdom of God.

12 And when (according to the parable) the king 'wished to make a reckoning.' It is worthwhile to see to what time we ought to refer the things that are said. For if it was after the consummation, or during the consummation itself (at the time of the anticipated judgement), how might someone preserve what is said of him who owed 'a hundred denarii' and was choked by him who had obtained grace for many talents? If it preceded the judgement, on the other hand, who can point to a reckoning made by a king 'with his servants' before that? We will say, therefore, that this seems to occur at the times predicted of the judgement. The evidence of this is a parable placed at the end of this same Gospel, and another in Luke. In order not to prolong our discourse by quoting it, we will say briefly that the parable in Matthew shows that 'a certain man who went into a far country called his servants and delivered his substance to them, and to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one talent.'⁴² 'After a long time the lord of those servants returned.'⁴³ And it is written in these same words that 'he made a reckoning with them'. Consider, then, what it says, 'And he made a reckoning with them', and compare it with the statement, 'And he began to make a reckoning'. Observe also that he designated the journey time of the householder in relation to that time 'as long as we are in the body, we are away from God',⁴⁴ but his arrival, when 'after a long time the lord of those servants comes', to be the time of judgement when he shall have come at the consummation. In Luke, however, it shows very clearly that 'a certain nobleman set off for a far-off region to receive a kingdom for himself and to return.'⁴⁵ And when he set off he called his ten servants and 'gave them ten minas and said to them, Trade until I come.'⁴⁶ And that nobleman, who was hated by his citizens who sent 'a delegation after him' because they did not want him to rule over them, returned 'after he had received the kingdom and ordered the servants to whom he had given money to be summoned that he might see what their trading had been.'⁴⁷ Who, therefore, would not say that that nobleman who went off 'to a distant region to receive a kingdom for himself and returned' is Christ who departed to receive the kingdom both of the world and of all things which are in it. Those who received the ten minas, furthermore, are those to whom the stewardship of the word has been entrusted, and his citizens (based on the

⁴⁰ Mk 4:34.

⁴¹ See 2 Thess 2:4.

⁴² See Mt 25:14-15.

⁴³ Mt 25:19.

⁴⁴ 2 Cor 5:6.

⁴⁵ Lk 19:12.

⁴⁶ Lk 19:13.

⁴⁷ Lk 19:14, 15.

fact that one had been born in this world and received human nature) who did not want him to reign are the Jews and the other faithless people who do not want to believe in him?

13 We have referred the words, 'Who wished to make a reckoning with his servants', to the time of the consummation when he is truly king when he has received the kingdom. At its reception, 'he wished to make a reckoning with his servants, and when he began to make it one owing many talents was brought to him', and he was brought as if to a king by his servants, the angels, of course. And perhaps the servant is that person to whom he had entrusted some great stewardship, and who, because he had not managed it well but had dissipated all that had been entrusted to him, has become 'a debtor of many talents' as it were. Since he does not have whence 'he might repay', the king orders that he 'be sold' along with his wife, to whom he is married and has become the father of certain children. And it is no trivial task to see father, mother, and sons in spiritual terms. For just as the Jerusalem which is above is the mother of Paul and of all like him, so Syene of Egypt is mother of certain ones, or Memphis, and Tyre and Sidon of others, and still other cities which are named in the Scriptures are mothers of impious nations. And just as Jerusalem is the bride adorned for Christ, 'her husband', so too those mothers are wives or brides of certain powers that possess them. And just as there are certain sons of Jerusalem as mother and of Christ as father, so there are certain sons of Syene or Memphis or Tyre or Sidon and of the princes who have been set over them as fathers. And perhaps also that 'one' who 'was brought to the king' has 'a wife' and 'sons' whom, at first, the king 'ordered to be sold', but later had 'mercy and forgave him all' his 'debt', not ignorant of what would follow, but so that we might learn what was done. Each one, therefore, who has (as we have explained it) a wife or bride or sons, will give a reckoning when the king shall come 'to make a reckoning', even if he is brought at the beginning of making a reckoning. For each of them also has debtors as princes of something, whether Syene or Memphis or Tyre or Sidon or some such place.

That man, therefore, who was forgiven and received the indulgence 'goes out' from the king and 'finds one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and chokes him saying, Repay whatever you owe me'. In my opinion, 'he choked him' because he went out from the king, for had he not gone out from the king he would not have choked his fellow servant. Consider in addition the exactness of Scripture. The servant 'who owed many talents fell down and supplicated' the king as the king who had received a kingdom and had come to make 'an account', but the one who 'owed a hundred denarii fell down' and did not 'supplicate', but 'asked' his fellow servant 'saying, Be patient with me and I will repay you all'. And the king, indeed, 'had mercy and forgave him' with his entire debt, but he was not willing to 'be merciful' to his fellow servant. And he who had previously forgiven, did not send the man who owed

many talents to prison, but 'ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, and sons, and the debt to be repaid, but that servant went and sent the fellow servant to prison until he should repay what he owed'. But there are also certain 'fellow servants' of him who had obtained forgiveness of his 'many talents', who 'see what was done' by the unmerciful servant, and being merciful like the king, 'they were very sad' for him 'who owed a hundred denarii' and had been sent 'to prison', and wanting to help the man who had been sent 'to prison, they described in detail to the lord what had happened'. And notice that it is not written that they defamed or said, but, 'they described in detail'. And 'then his lord called him and said to him' what he had not said previously, for as a pious and merciful king he did not say at first to the man who had been brought to him as one owing 'many talents': 'Worthless' or 'evil servant'. This he reserved so that it is not said about the money, but about the fellow servant who had been sent 'to prison'. And then he also reproached him about the forgiveness of his debts given because of his asking. And notice also the humility of the king, because 'the man who owed many talents' did one thing, but the king calls it something else. For that debtor 'fell down and supplicated him saying', but when his 'lord' and king summoned him he did not say, 'I forgave you the whole debt' because you supplicated me, but: 'because you asked me'. And angered, he delivered him to the torturers until he should repay the debt. Now he did not 'order him and his wife and his sons to be sold', because he had to suffer something worse because of his evil, being delivered to 'the torturers until he should repay the whole debt' while he was tortured by them. But who are those torturers who have been appointed over punishments?

15⁴⁸ 'And it came to pass when Jesus had finished those words he passed over' from there 'and came into the borders of Judaea'.⁴⁹

He did not go to mid-Judaea, but to its borders, where there was a dividing of the Jordan: 'large crowds had followed him' all the way across it, whom he also 'healed' at the borders 'of Judaea trans Jordan', where baptism used to be administered to people. Perhaps this is why it is said of the crowd which follows the Lord to the baptism of the Jordan: 'And he healed them there', for truly all are healed of their spiritual infirmities in baptism who, moreover, have been baptized in the Jordan which is made in the mystery of Christ from the two founts of divinity and flesh. But consider the difference between the crowds and Peter who had left all and followed him. For the crowds did not say to him what Peter said: 'Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What in particular will there be for us?'⁵⁰ And in relation to the crowd it is written: 'And large crowds followed him'. And Matthew, when the Lord said to him, 'Follow me', did not simply follow, but 'rose up and followed'.⁵¹ For it is a great thing to rise up and thus follow Christ. Many, therefore, follow Christ as 'the crowds

⁴⁸ There is no text corresponding to ch. 14 in the *Vetus Interpretatio*.

⁴⁹ Mt 19:1.

⁵⁰ Mt 19:27; cf. Lk 5:11.

⁵¹ Mt 9:9.

followed'; they do not rise up that they might follow, nor do they leave all their previous things. They are few, however, who rise up and follow and leave everything.

16 'And Pharisees came to him tempting him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every possible cause?'⁵²

Some of those, therefore, coming and questioning Christ were 'tempting' him. And since such a one as the Lord has been tempted, who of his disciples who has been appointed to teach would bear it grievously if he should be tempted by certain people? Nevertheless, he responds to the tempters with a pious teaching. Some, therefore, were saying, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every possible cause?' He responded to them and said: 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said: For this reason, a man shall leave father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh? Therefore, they are no longer two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined let not man separate.'⁵³ I think that the Pharisees who said, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every possible cause' put this word forth wishing to catch him in whatever he said. If he had said, It is lawful to divorce her, they would have blamed him for dissolving marriages, as it were; but if he had said, It is not lawful, then they would have blamed him for ordering husbands to live with wives even when they were sinning. But they did not anticipate how clearly and irreproachably he would respond to them, just as he did elsewhere when they asked him, 'Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?'⁵⁴ Had he said, Pay it, they would have blamed him for subjecting the people of God to men and delivering them to the Romans and not to the laws of God. On the other hand, had he said, It is not lawful to pay it, again they would have blamed him for inciting seditions and conflicts and making the people withdraw from Caesar who governed the world. But notice how irreproachably he responds, first to those who ask, 'Is it lawful to divorce a wife for every possible cause' saying, 'Have you not read that he who made them made them male and female?' and what follows. And to their objection, 'Why did Moses command to give a bill of divorce?' he says: 'Because of the hardness of your hearts.'⁵⁵ He perceives that every cause does not justly dissolve a marriage, but that a man must live with a wife 'as with a weaker vessel and give her honour' and bear 'the burdens' of her faults.⁵⁶ And he refutes the Pharisees who gloried in the letter of the law from the very writings of Moses when he says, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?' and what follows.

Moreover, that we may touch on that passage where it is said, 'This one will be called woman, because she has been taken from her man', to know that so

⁵² Mt 19:3.

⁵⁵ Mt 19:7-8.

⁵³ Mt 19:4-6.

⁵⁶ See 1 Pet 3:7; Gal 6:2.

⁵⁴ Mt 22:17.

far as Greek is concerned there is no appropriate word that she should be called woman because she was taken from her man. Accordingly, when we read Hebrew we discover that etymology suitably presented in Hebrew. It is as follows in the Hebrew: ISSA (which means both woman and taken; for among the Hebrews a woman is called 'taken') likewise MĒIS (which means from man). You see how ISSA has been joined to the side of MĒIS, that is, taken from man.⁵⁷ From this Theodotion put it as follows: She shall be called woman, a taking,⁵⁸ because she was taken from her man. Symmachus translated, 'She shall be called ISSA because she is woman from man.' And because what is between those who are joined by God must be worthy of God who joined them, he adds saying, 'Therefore, they are no longer two.' For where there is harmony and agreement of a man with a woman and of a woman with a man, with him first, as it were, and her submitting in accordance with the saying, 'And he will rule you,'⁵⁹ it is truly said of them, 'They are no longer two.' It is 'God', therefore, who 'has joined' the two into one, so that they may no longer be 'two', where 'a woman is joined to a man by God'.⁶⁰ And since 'God has joined' them, there is, therefore, grace in those whom 'God has joined'. Paul, knowing this, called a pure conjugal union a grace saying, 'I wish all people to be as myself, but each one has his own grace from God, one in this manner, another in that.'⁶¹ The conjugal union is a grace of God for those who have been joined by God and who are wise and do what the apostle commands: 'Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church', likewise, 'Let the wife honour her husband,'⁶² as the church honours Christ.

17 But since the apostle declares: 'And the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I consider it in relation to Christ and the church,'⁶³ it must be said that Christ did not divorce (if I may speak in this way) his first wife (that is the first synagogue), preserving in another spiritual aspect the saying, 'What God has joined together, let not man separate', except when that wife has committed adultery, corrupted by the adulterous enemy by whose counsel she also plotted against her husband and wished to kill him saying, 'Away with such a one from the earth' and, 'Crucify, crucify him'.⁶⁴ She, therefore, cut herself off rather than her husband divorcing her. And for the sake of the church Christ, the man, left his Father with whom he was⁶⁵ 'when he was in the form of God',⁶⁶ and he left his 'mother', when he was also himself the Son of the Jerusalem which was above, and he was joined in the body with that 'wife of his' who had fallen down here, and 'the two' became 'one flesh'. For it was for her sake too that he 'became flesh' when he was the Word, 'and lived among us', and 'they are one flesh' since it is said of the wife, the church, 'You are the body of Christ and

⁵⁷ See Gen 2:23 in Hebrew.

⁵⁸ *Sumptio*, which appears here, is a noun in apposition with *mulier*, 'woman'.

⁵⁹ Gen 3:16.

⁶⁰ Prov 19:14.

⁶¹ 1 Cor 7:7.

⁶² Eph 5:25, 33.

⁶³ Eph 5:31, 32.

⁶⁴ Lk 23:18, 21; cf Acts 22:22.

⁶⁵ See Jn 1:1.

⁶⁶ Phil 2:6.

members of member.'⁶⁷ And there is no other body of Christ than the body of the church, and God has united them, ordering that man not separate the church from Christ, whom God has joined together. On this basis, every soul that knows itself to be inseparable from Christ says, 'What will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or distress?' and other things, and, 'I am confident that neither death nor life, nor any other of those things which follow, 'will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus'.⁶⁸

18 Next let us take up that word that the Pharisees addressed to Jesus: 'Why, then, did Moses command us to give a bill of divorce and dismiss her?'⁶⁹

23 Because when Moses wrote the law he considered not only what true justice is, but after that he considered the weakness of those on behalf of whom the law was given, and condescended and commanded many things, inasmuch as there is also the law of a bill of divorce to be given. But because it was given in relation to their weakness and not in relation to justice, the Word shows that it had been subjoined when he says, 'But from the beginning it was not so'.⁷⁰ There are also in the New Testament certain statements that are not related to true justice, but have been appointed 'in relation to the hardness of heart' of carnal people. For example, 'because of the hardness of' our 'heart' the law has been given to us which says: 'It is good not to touch a woman, but because of fornication let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband' and what follows.⁷¹ And if this has been commanded because of the hardness of our heart, how much more is that because of the hardness of our heart which he says elsewhere about widows who wish to marry again: 'But if they do not contain themselves let them marry, for it is better to marry than to be inflamed'.⁷² For I know that some who preside over churches have gone beyond Scripture and permitted a woman to take a husband while her previous one is living—and some have acted contrary to Scripture (which says, 'A wife has been bound for as long as her husband lives', likewise: 'While her husband is living she will be called an adulteress if she is with another man'⁷³); they have not, however, permitted this without any reason at all. Perhaps they permitted it because of this kind of weakness in incontinent people in comparison to things which are evil, as opposed to those things which were written 'from the beginning': 'But I say to you that whoever shall divorce his wife, except because of fornication, and marry another, commits adultery, and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery'.⁷⁴

24 But perhaps some audacious Jewish man opposing the teaching of our Saviour will say that when Jesus says, 'Whoever divorces his wife, except because

⁶⁷ Jn 1:14; 1 Cor 12:27.

⁶⁸ Rom 8:35, 38.

⁶⁹ Mt 19:7; Dt 24:4. There is no text in the *Vetus Interpretatio* corresponding to chapters 18–22.

⁷⁰ Mt 19:8.

⁷¹ 1 Cor 7:1–2.

⁷² 1 Cor 7:9.

⁷³ 1 Cor 7:39; Rom 7:3.

⁷⁴ Mt 19:9.

of fornication, makes her commit adultery', he has permitted divorcing a wife just as Moses, who, he claims, commanded this 'because of the hardness of heart' of the Jews. And he will say that it is also because of 'fornication', for which a wife is justly divorced by a man, that Moses too commanded the divorce of a wife if 'a shameful thing' should be found 'in her'.⁷⁵ But one must respond to this and say, that if according to the law an adulteress is stoned,⁷⁶ it is clear that the 'shameful thing' is not understood to be adultery; for it is not necessary to give a 'bill of divorce' in the case of adultery. But perhaps Moses designated every fault of a wife a shameful thing for which, if a husband should find such in a wife who does not find favour with him, a bill of divorce is written and she is sent away 'from the house' of the husband. But 'from the beginning it was not so'. But after this the Lord does not permit the divorce of a wife for any other fault except the sole reason of fornication, saying: 'Whoever shall divorce his wife except for the reason of fornication, makes her commit adultery'. But it must be investigated if he orders the divorce of a wife for the sole reason of fornication, what should be done if a wife has not committed fornication, but has done some other serious thing. Perhaps she is found, for example, to be a sorceress, or a murderess of their infant son, or she is found in any homicide whatsoever, or to be sending the household away and evilly scattering her husband's property, or stealing from her husband. Is a woman like this justly divorced, since the Lord forbids divorcing 'except for the reason of fornication'? For either way, something seems to be repulsive, but I do not know if it is truly repulsive. For to put up with such sins of a woman which are worse than acts of adultery and fornication will seem to be irrational; in the same way, everyone will admit that it is impious to act contrary to the intention of the Saviour's teaching. I am arguing, therefore, that he did not command peremptorily that no one may divorce his 'wife except for the reason of fornication', but he said, as if explaining the matter, 'He who might divorce his wife, except for the reason of fornications, makes her commit adultery'. And he does truly indeed (so far as is in his power) 'make her commit adultery' when he divorces her who is not committing adultery. For if 'she shall be called an adulteress if she should be with another man while her husband is living',⁷⁷ without doubt he who divorces her gives her the occasion for a second marriage and for this reason 'makes her commit adultery'. But you will investigate if a man has a just excuse with God who (so far as it concerns him) divorces a wife and 'causes her to commit adultery' when she is, for example, a sorceress, or murderer, or something of this nature. And a man can also cause his wife to commit adultery for other reasons without divorcing her. For example, the man who permits his wife to do what she wishes beyond measure and to lower herself to the friendship of whatever men she wishes; frequently vices are nurtured in

⁷⁵ Dt 24:1.⁷⁶ See Dt 22:21.⁷⁷ Rom 7:3.

women from the simplicity of husbands like this. But report, after you investigate diligently, whether there is the opportunity for an excuse for such husbands in errors of this kind. Likewise, one who withholds himself from his wife frequently 'makes her commit adultery', since he does not fulfil her desire. Perhaps his action is derived from an irrational hope for greater holiness and purity, and perhaps he deserves more reproach than the man who (so far as is in his power) 'makes her commit adultery' when he divorces her who is not committing fornication, but has been caught in sorcery, or murder, or in any other more serious sins whatever. For on the basis that a woman is an adulteress although she appears to be legitimately married to a man while her previous husband is living, likewise also a man, although he may appear legitimately to take a wife 'divorced' from another man, does not legitimately take her (in the opinion of Christ), but rather 'commits adultery' as taking a wife who belongs to another.

25 After these things, the apostles, understanding how many risks there may be between spouses which the husband is duty bound to put up with, and to be destroyed for the sake of preserving the marriage, but divorcing to be a sin against God, responded to him, taking refuge in chastity as an easier and more beneficial thing, and said, Therefore, 'it is not advantageous to marry if it is this way between a man and a woman.'⁷⁸ And Christ responded to these words teaching us that a grace is given by God to those who restrain themselves absolutely, which grace is not seized by restraint alone but is available from God through many prayers. For this is what he means when he says, 'All do not receive this word, but those to whom it has been given.'⁷⁹ And since some misrepresent Christ's words, 'to whom it has been given', as if they have an excuse when they wish to be chaste but are not capable, we must say to them: If indeed we accept what is said simply, 'but to whom it has been given', and we do not pay attention to what he says elsewhere, 'Ask and it will be given to you' and, 'Everyone who asks receives', either we are not faithful to the Scriptures or we do not know them.⁸⁰ For let the one who wishes to be capable of the word asserted about chastity ask, believing him who says it, and he will receive, if he does not doubt the words, 'Everyone who asks receives'. And let us say of the achievement in the passage that none of those who have not received have asked, even if they appear to have asked, for it is not right to say that he is a liar who said, 'Everyone who asks receives'.⁸¹ Who, therefore, is it who asks than one who believes in Christ who says, 'If you stand praying', 'believe that you receive and you will receive'?⁸² But he who asks needs to do all things in his power that he may pray 'in the spirit' and pray 'with the mind', mindful of the apostolic word that says: 'Praying without ceasing.'⁸³ And it is useful also to

⁷⁸ Mt 19:10.⁷⁹ Mt 19:11.⁸⁰ Mt 7:7, 8.⁸¹ Mt 7:8.⁸² Mk 11:25, 24.⁸³ See 1 Cor 14:15; 1 Thess 5:17.

know what one ought to ask that he might merit receiving, and the statement: 'I say to you, even if he will not rise up and give to him because he is his friend, nevertheless because of his importunity he will rise up and give him all that he wants' and he adds, 'And I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened.'⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Lk 11:8-10.

Book 15 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 19:12–20:16

1 'For there are eunuchs who were born such from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made such by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let him who can receive this, receive it'.¹

Before we expound what we see in this passage, we point out that there are two expositions of the passage. There are some who, considering the two emasculations to be physical, and supposing that they are speaking conformably, have dared to say also that the third emasculation is physical as, for example, those who make themselves eunuchs in a physical manner out of fear of God and expose themselves to taunts and embarrassment not only among those alien to the faith, but also among those who usually overlook all human ignorance. Others, however, and there are many who have understood it in this way, have not examined the manner of the sequence of the words and have said, similarly to the previous interpreters, that the two prior emasculations are physical and nothing spiritual is to be understood in them; but they have said that the third emasculation is not physical word for word, since in the hope of the kingdom of heaven they cut off the passion of desire by the very austere word. Now the first have, indeed, become lovers of the letters of the Gospel and, without understanding that Jesus also spoke these words in parables, they have consequently understood the third with the prior two physical emasculations. They do not err so far as concerns the sequence of the three, but they have erred unavoidably since they have thought those first two emasculations are understood only physically. For it was logical after they had understood the prior emasculations physically that they suppose the third one also to be physical. The second interpreters, however, explained the third emasculation in a saving manner to be the incision of the Word, but they did

¹ Mt 19:12.

not consider that such an explanation was also appropriate for the two previous emasculations in conformity with the third.

2 But let the person whom it bothers that there is also a Gospel letter that kills² hear, for example, what he said to his apostles: 'When I sent you without bag and wallet and shoes, did you lack anything? They said, Nothing. Jesus responded, But now let him who has a bag take it, likewise also a wallet, and let him who does not have a sword sell his garment and buy a sword.'³ If someone, therefore, wishing to look to the letter and not understanding the intention of the words, should sell his material garment and buy a murderous sword, when he takes up such a sword, as it were, acting contrary to the will of Christ and understanding his word perversely, he will perish, and perhaps he will perish 'by the sword.'⁴ This is not the place to explain of what sword he speaks. But let him also consider that statement: 'Greet no one on the road.'⁵ If one does not investigate what Jesus intends in this saying, he has instructed that one greet 'no one on the road' as if he were jealous for the life of the apostles, and he will appear to all as unfeeling and stupid, and thus this person will teach all to hate the words of Christ as if they teach people to be rude and unfeeling. And perhaps also he will die, hated by all, misled by the letter which kills him. And if someone also casts off his right eye or hand or foot, he will suffer destruction besides the unfruitful reproach of insanity.

4⁶ Let us, however, if we are spiritual, understand the words of the Spirit spiritually, and introduce a moral edification from those three emasculations. Those who abstain from sexual activity are to be called eunuchs now according to the moral interpretation. And there are three distinctions among those who practise continence: some are by nature more sexually impotent than other men, of whom it is rightly said, 'Some are eunuchs who are born such from their mother's womb.'⁷ Others practise continence because of human words. The divine word does not deny their virile lust but human words do, as for example those of Gentile philosophers among the ancients, or in the view of those among the heresies 'who forbid marriage'⁸. These 'are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men.'⁹ But he who receives 'the word that is living and effectual and sharper than any twice sharpened sword', and the 'sword of the Spirit'¹⁰ (as the apostles says), and shall have cut off his lust without touching his body, and shall have done this not involuntarily because of the fear of men nor for the sake of human praise, but solely because of the hope of the kingdom of heaven, these 'are those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God.'¹¹

² See 2 Cor 3:6.

³ Lk 22:35-6.

⁴ Mt 26:52.

⁵ Lk 10:4.

⁶ There is no translation of chapter 3 in the *Vetus Interpretatio*.

⁷ Mt 19:12.

⁸ See 1 Tim 4:3.

⁹ Mt 19:12.

¹⁰ Heb 4:12; see Eph 6:17.

¹¹ Mt 19:12.

5 It is a remarkable thing, therefore, to receive being made a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of God, because 'not all receive it, but those to whom it has been given'.¹² And it 'is given' to all who ask God for a sword of this kind. But if it is also necessary to understand eunuchs in a moral way in relation to past events, we will say that some are eunuchs of Pharaoh who produce nothing good, as they are his cup-bearers and, having been mutilated, bring him food,¹³ but also men of God who never produce evil are eunuchs for the precise reason that they might rebuild the overthrows of Jerusalem. It is written of the first in Genesis, and of the second in the second book of Esdras who said, 'And I was a eunuch of the king'.¹⁴ And examining the passage you will discover, therefore, why it was worthy to be made a eunuch of the ruler that the temple of God might be restored. For the children of the Hebrews say that Daniel and the three boys were made eunuchs in Babylon so that the Word of God spoken to Ezekiel might be fulfilled: 'For they will take some of your seed and make them eunuchs in the house of the king of Babylon'.¹⁵ And they say that Isaiah also prophesied of these and said: 'Let not the eunuch say, I am a barren tree. This is what the Lord says to the eunuchs: If you shall keep my commandments and choose what I will, I will give them a choice place in my house and a name even better than sons and daughters'.¹⁶ It is good, therefore, not to produce children in Babylon in relation to the mystical place, but to be without seed so far as Babylon is concerned, just as Daniel, so that we may produce visions, prophecies, and other good works from the Holy Spirit (just as Daniel and those who were with him).

6 'Then children were brought to him so that he might lay his hands on them and pray; but the disciples rebuked them. And Jesus said, Permit the children to come to me and do not forbid them, for such is the kingdom of heaven. And laying his hands on them, he departed from there'.¹⁷

It is to be known that there is no time when children are not brought to Jesus, about whom he says (as if he receives them as a deposit from God): 'Behold, I and the children whom God gave me'.¹⁸ Now some of those children are infants, but others are said to be nurslings, as if smaller than infants, and our Lord perfects 'praise from the mouth' of both, so that recognizing his blessings of this nature on the children, we might say: 'From the mouth of infants and nurslings you have perfected praise'.¹⁹ And we are calling those children who are still carnal and infants in Christ. The apostle, knowing that the Corinthians were such, said: 'And I could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to little children in Christ'.²⁰ Such children were brought at that time, and they are daily being brought to Jesus. The many who are constituted little ones in Christ and suck milk and 'have need of milk, not solid food'²¹ approach the faith and are a symbol of the offering of the children.

¹² Ibid.¹³ See Gen 40.¹⁴ See 2 Esd 11:11.¹⁵ Is 39:7.¹⁶ Is 56:3.¹⁷ Mt 19:13-15.¹⁸ Is 8:18.¹⁹ Ps 8:2.²⁰ 1 Cor 3:1.²¹ Heb 5:12.

He who said, 'like a nurse cherishing her children' nourishes them,²² says of them, 'I gave you milk to drink, not food; For you were not yet ready, but you are still not ready'.

Now when the evangelists set forth this passage, they related that children were brought to Jesus, but they did not reveal by whom they were brought, leaving it to us, of course, that we might investigate what they have passed over in silence. Did all three evangelists pass over it by chance (since they could have written in agreement whether they were brought by their parents or by their mothers), or did they do this with divine reason and wisdom, so that they might show that those who bring the 'children' to Jesus are angels who draw near and minister to him, since they wisely recognize the distinction of children or infants, such as needed to be offered to Christ. And the intention of those offering the children is 'that Jesus might lay his hands on them and pray'. For the prayer of Jesus Christ and his touching the children and infants who cannot hear what those already spiritual hear is sufficient for the support of their instruction. The power of Jesus Christ lays hold of them once he has placed only the 'hands' of his consideration 'on them', and subsequently no evil touches them. And perhaps (so far as the text is concerned) the intention of those bringing the 'children' and the infants was a consideration of this kind: that it is impossible that after the Lord has touched 'the children' or infants, and by his touch has placed divine power in them, that a destructive force or anything daemonic can touch them.

7 Now I think that many evil powers lie idle around the human soul from the beginning, continually lying in ambush for it. Therefore, they were bringing the children that he might touch them, as if those who bring the children or infants to the Saviour had already experienced his power on previous occasions, since the power was the result of the imposition of his hands and his prayer for the children and infants, and harmful things were driven away by his touch. The power which occurred in them suffices not only to guard them for the present but also subsequently, as if constituted a restraining power to drive the touch of contrary powers away from them. The Saviour, therefore, aware that this was not something simple and superfluous, as it were, but saving for all who received the imposition of his hands, says to his disciples who were forbidding the 'children' or infants to be brought: 'Permit the children to come to me and do not forbid them'. If indeed what we have said above about those bringing or who those were who were bringing is reasonable, consequently eminent holy powers and powers taught by the Son of God as 'disciples' of Jesus are understood to be among them, for it is possible that the name disciples of Jesus be suitable for them, so that not only human beings but angels as well are his 'disciples'. But if someone thinks what we are saying goes

²² 1 Thess 2:7.

too far and wants the title 'disciples' to apply only to humans as those disciples who forbid the children and infants to be brought to Jesus, this passage must be understood to mean that some of those understood to be teachers are the simple who profess the doctrine of the word, having, as it were, a manner of speaking that is childish and is like the milk by which the novices are still nurtured. These were bringing children and infants to the Saviour. They are unable to nourish them with a word more spiritual than the status of their narrow understanding requires. They cannot say, as he who says, 'I am debtor to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the foolish.'²³ Since these, therefore, are bringing children and infants of this kind to the Saviour, that is novices in the faith and even less educated, those who appear to be more accomplished than those simple teachers and are, therefore, disciples of Jesus, reprove those who teach simply and bring children and infants to Christ by their simple teaching before they learn the reason of the righteousness of such children and infants.

Now you will understand this clearly if you have considered what the apostle says: 'Consider your calling, brothers, that not many were wise according to the flesh, not many strong, not many noble, but God chose the foolish things of the world' and 'the weak' and 'the ignoble' and the things 'which are not, that he might destroy those things which are.'²⁴ Therefore, let anyone who professes the ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline be aware of anyone presenting certain foolish, ignoble, and weak things of the world, which for this reason are called children and infants, and when he sees, let him forbid him (as if he is acting without judgement) who brings such children and infants to the Saviour and teacher. And see if it is not appropriate to relate what we are investigating to the disciples who are bringing some 'children that Jesus might lay his hands on them and pray', but are prohibiting those others. And let him say to those who prohibit those bringing children to Christ, the teacher, Saviour, and Lord: 'Permit the children, and do not prohibit them coming to me.' After this Jesus exhorts his disciples, now full-grown men, to condescend for the benefit of the children (that they become children, as it were, for the children that they might gain the children²⁵), and says, 'For such is the kingdom of heaven.' For he himself, 'although he was in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal to God' but became a child, as Matthew says of him, that 'the star which they saw in the east preceded them until it came and stopped where the child was.'²⁶ Not only Matthew, but even the angel himself who appeared to Jesus called our Saviour who was so excellent and great, a child saying: 'Arise, and take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt.'²⁷ Therefore, humbling himself he became as a child, that he might justly say, 'Permit, and do not prohibit the children from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

²³ Rom 1:14.²⁴ 1 Cor 1:26-8.²⁵ See 1 Cor 9:22.²⁶ Phil 2:6; Mt 2:9.²⁷ Mt 2:11.

8 We ought, therefore, to give diligent attention to these matters so that we not, supposing that we have more excellent wisdom and greater spiritual progress, despise the little ones of the church as if we were great, but aware of his words, 'for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' let us become such people that 'the little ones' too may be saved by our understanding. And let us not only permit the children to be brought to Jesus, or prohibit the 'children to come' to Jesus, but let us also ourselves, in humility become children with the children and fulfil the will of the Lord that God may exalt us. And let the children of this kind know that although they are not able (as children) to follow all things which are said, nevertheless Jesus placed his 'hands' on them, and 'placing' them 'he departed from there,' leaving power in the children through his touch. 'He departed' from the children, who were, of course, as children unable to follow Jesus as his other accomplished disciples.

Now if indeed 'the sayings of the Lord' in the Gospel are 'pure sayings' and 'silver tried by fire,' 'proven' silver, transmitted 'to the earth,' and vigorously 'purified,' 'purified seven times,'²⁸ there ought doubtlessly to be some valid reason why Matthew indicates two reasons for bringing the children when he sets forth this passage, but what follows does not apply to the two preceding reasons. The children were brought not only that 'he might lay his hands on them,' but also that 'he might pray'.

9 Now it is written after this that 'placing his hands on them he departed from there,' and it does not add, and praying. It was possible to say: 'And placing his hands on them' and praying, 'he departed from there.' And consider if you can say that the prayer of Christ was reserved for the older children who could receive not only the imposition of his hands on them but also his prayer to the Father for them, but for the smaller children the imposition of his hands was sufficient. And when he says, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven' he is exhorting that no one, however wise he may be in the church, should glory against the small ones of Christ nor despise the infants and children, since the kingdom of heaven is not of such children as those, but of those who in humility have become as children although they are mature in their understanding. And the saying in Luke commends this interpretation, since when he had said, 'They were bringing children and infants to him that he might touch them, but the disciples seeing it were prohibiting them. And Jesus said, Permit the children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' Luke adds immediately, as if in agreement with the preceding meaning, 'Truly I say to you, he who does not receive the kingdom of God as a child will not enter into it.'²⁹

10 'And behold, one approached him and said, Good Teacher, What good thing should I do that I might have eternal life? He said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except one, God.'³⁰

²⁸ Ps 11:7.²⁹ Lk 18:15-17.³⁰ Mt 19:16-17.

Since it is written also of a good man: 'A good man brings forth good things from the good treasure of his heart,'³¹ and of good angels, and of the good Holy Spirit, and of the good Son of God, here the Saviour responds to him who said, 'What good thing should I do that I might have eternal life; that in the proper sense it is fitting that no one is good except God alone, saying, 'Why do you call me good? One is good, God'. And it is necessary to know that here indeed good is said in the proper sense to be appropriate only to God, and in other passages it is used improperly. The fact, then, that the expression good is found in many other passages is not contradictory to this which is said here: 'No one is good except one, God', for they are all used in an improper sense (as we said), but one is used in the proper sense of God.

The Lord himself, who is 'the image of the invisible God' and is thus also 'the image of his goodness',³² differs from the goodness of the Father just as the image of goodness differs from the original goodness. In the same way, all to whom the title of goodness is attributed differ from the goodness of the Son. But all who are good differ more from the goodness of the Son than the goodness of the Son differs from the goodness of the Father because the Son is closer to the Father in all good things than all others are to the Son. And perhaps also because of him who said, 'What good thing should I do, that I might have eternal life', Christ made this response to him: 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except one, God', so that he might confirm that which he says elsewhere: 'When you shall have done all things that have been commanded to you, you ought to say: We are unprofitable servants, because we have done what we ought to do.'³³ For even if we shall have done all that has been commanded us, we have not in this way done anything good (so far as these words are concerned). If what we do are truly good things it would not have been written that when we do them we should say that we are unprofitable servants, if the expression goodness in the proper sense is appropriate for people, since our every good work is improperly, and not properly, said to be good. For truly when we turn aside 'from evil' and do 'good', so far as comparison with other people who do not want to turn aside 'from evil' and do 'good', what we do is said to be good. But so far as truth is concerned, in relation to the statement in this passage, that 'one' is 'good', our good is not good. And so, 'no one living will be vindicated in the sight of God'³⁴ because in comparison with the justice of God, all human justice is found not to be justice, nor thus is anyone found good in the sight of the good God in comparison with his goodness, although in comparison with other humans someone will be called good.

11 But someone could say that the Lord, knowing the disposition and purpose of the inquirer to be somewhat unsuitable that he would scarcely perform a human good, said to him who asks, 'What good thing should I do?', 'Why do

³¹ Lk 6:45.

³² Col 1:15; Wisd 7:26.

³³ Lk 17:10.

³⁴ Ps 142:2.

you ask me about the good?' As if he should say, Since you are unprepared to do those things which are said, 'Why do you ask me about the good' which you can do to possess 'eternal life'? Thus, he teaches when 'one' is truly 'good'. Now consider how even those things which appear to be contrary breathe out his goodness, such as: 'I will strike' and 'I will kill'; no less than the words, 'And I will make alive' and 'I will heal'.³⁵ And if he himself causes pain, we ought to know that a physician frequently causes pain, for when God causes pain 'he again restores'. So, it is also of his goodness: whom he strikes, 'he strikes' as sons. 'For what son is there whom his father does not correct?'³⁶ But also, 'No chastisement at the present seems to bring joy, but sorrow. Afterwards, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of justice to those who are disciplined by it'.³⁷ Therefore, just as God strikes, so he also heals; for what is written is true: 'He struck, and his hands healed'.³⁸ Even if what I want to say appears novel, nevertheless I say it: What is called his wrath is itself also of the good God (for he censures as he works the work of salvation), and what is called his anger reproves and corrects, since it is the work of the good God. Many things can be said of his goodness for the edification of people that they not be confused about the goodness of God and about the magnitude of his kindness. For he rightly 'hides' many things 'from those who fear him' so that they not despise the 'riches of his goodness and his patience and forbearance, and by the hardness of their heart and without repentance of heart store up wrath for themselves', which they will not store up if the magnitude of his 'goodness' is hidden from them.³⁹

12 After this he says: 'If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments'.⁴⁰ Take note that he thus responds here, as if the person who was asking 'about the good' still stood outside of life, 'If you wish to enter into life'. And here I ask how someone might be outside of life, and how he might enter 'into life', and whether one way a person might be outside life is to be outside him who said, 'I am the life'.⁴¹ And another might be that everyone who is on the earth (even if he appear to be most just), can be in the shadow of life, but not in life itself, since he is encompassed by a body of death and says: 'Who will free me from this body of death?' and 'sits in the region and in the shadow of death', because he has not yet come into the land of the living.⁴² But whoever, abstains 'from dead works' and strives for living works contrary to them, and now no longer speaks dead words but in accordance with the living word 'of God' living words, and no longer has dead thoughts in his heart but living ones, will enter into life. Just as there are dead works and living works, and dead words and living words, so are there also dead thoughts and living thoughts. The apostle says of these: 'As their thoughts alternately accuse or also defend them on the

³⁵ Dt 32:39.³⁶ Heb 12:7.³⁷ Heb 12:11.³⁸ Job 5:18.³⁹ Rom 2:4, 5; see Ps 30:20.⁴⁰ Mt 19:17.⁴¹ Jn 11:25; 14:6.⁴² Rom 7:14; Mt 4:16.

day when the Lord shall judge the secret things of people.'⁴³ And he will be saved whose thoughts shall defend him; but he will perish whose thoughts accuse him. If we too, then, wish 'to enter life', let us hear Jesus saying: 'If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments', and to the extent that we keep the commandments, we will enter life, either into its more inner and excellent parts, or into its more ordinary parts, or to whatever part of that life to which our observance of the commandments shall lead us.

13 And when he hears, 'Keep the commandments, he responds: Which?' that we may learn what sort of 'commandments' in particular Jesus wants us to observe. To this question Jesus said, 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false testimony; honour your father and mother', and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.⁴⁴ Perhaps those commandments are sufficient for someone to enter into the beginning of life (if I may speak in this way), but these, or others like them, are not sufficient to lead someone into the more inner parts of life, but he who shall ignore one of those commandments 'will' not 'enter' even the beginning of life. Therefore, everyone who wants to enter even the beginning of life must abstain from adultery, murder, and theft. For just as the adulterer and murderer do not enter 'into life', so neither does the thief, for many, even of those who appear to have believed in Christ, commit this sin when they engage in the affairs of this world and the financial activities which are entrusted to them, and who perform those ordinary activities which are not all free from stealing. And not only will thieves not enter 'into life', but neither will their companions or those who concur with them, for it is written in Isaiah, 'They are companions of thieves, loving money'; likewise, in the forty-ninth Psalm it is forbidden to recount the 'precepts' of the Lord and for one who agrees with thieves to take his 'testimony' into his mouth, as follows, 'If you were to see a thief, you would concur with him'. This is the first assertion, and in the second place, 'And you associate with adulterers'.⁴⁵ Notice that it does not speak of the thief himself or the adulterer himself, but of the one who concurs with thieves and associates with adulterers. One who wishes 'to enter life' should not bear false testimony and he who does not honour his 'father and mother' is expelled from life. But perhaps it is not so difficult to keep these commandments, but it is necessary for all who are led through the preceding commandments, to fulfil what he commands as a greater and more useful commandment: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', because as the apostle also says, 'You shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.⁴⁶ Now if every commandment 'is summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself', and he is perfect who has fulfilled every commandment,

⁴³ Rom 2:15, 16.

⁴⁴ Mt 19:18-19.

⁴⁵ Is 1:23; see Ps 49:16, 18.

⁴⁶ Rom 13:9.

it is clear that he will be perfect who has also fulfilled the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

14 But if he is 'perfect' who loves 'his neighbour as himself', try to find out in what way the Lord responds to the young man who says, 'I have kept all these things from my youth; what still remains for me?', as if he who had done 'all these things' was not yet made perfect, and as if agreeing with him who said he had done 'all these things', the Lord responds, 'If you wish to be perfect, go and sell all that you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me'. See, therefore, if we can respond to the proposed question as follows, that perhaps the words, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' can be suspected not to have been used in this place by the Lord, but to have been added by some unknown person who did not understand the sayings correctly. That this is an addition is established by the fact that when Mark and Luke set forth the same passage neither of them adds, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. And the person who wants to defend that this has been added will say, If the very same things have been set forth by the three in differing words, the Lord would never have said, 'One thing still remains for you', or 'you lack one thing',⁴⁷ to the person who had professed that he had fulfilled the commandment which says, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', especially since, according to the apostle, the commandments, 'You shall not kill' and those that follow, 'and if there is any other commandment, it has been summed up in this statement: You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.⁴⁸ For immediately after this Mark speaks as follows: 'Looking at him' (who had said: 'All these things I have kept from my youth'), 'he loved him' or, 'he kissed him'.⁴⁹ He appears to have affirmed the declaration of him who said that he had fulfilled all those things. For when he looks at him, in his mind he sees a person who professes with a good conscience to have fulfilled the proposed commandments. If, in addition to the other commandments, he had also said that he had fulfilled that command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', Mark and Luke would never have omitted the foremost and greatest commandment, unless perhaps someone should say that similar things have been written, but they were not said about that same man. But how, as if to one who was not yet perfect, and who in addition to the other commandments has also fulfilled the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', would Jesus have responded, 'If you wish to be perfect, Go, sell all that you possess, and give to the poor?'

For we find a substantial difference between the copies, whether from the negligence of the scribes, or the rashness of some, or because of those who fail to emend the writings, or because of those who either add or remove what pleases them in their emendations. In the copies of the Old Testament we could adjust readily whatever things were unsuitable for God by using the

⁴⁷ Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22.

⁴⁸ Rom 13:9.

⁴⁹ Mk 10:20, 21.

judgement of the other editions. For we preserved an agreement among those things that appeared to be dubious in the Septuagint because of the disagreement of the copies, by making use of the judgement of the other editions. We noted certain things as not found in the Hebrew (not daring to remove them completely), and we added certain things with asterisks from other editions in agreement with the Hebrew so that it might be clear what was not found in the Septuagint. But I did not think I could do this same thing in copies of the New Testament without danger. I did not think it to be unreasonable that I ought to set forth such conjectures along with the reasons and motives of the conjectures, as in this passage where it is said, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', since it is not found in Mark and Luke. But those who are able will judge whether the things we have explained are true or false.

Nevertheless, as this has also been considered, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', come, let us explain this passage in another way. It is written in a certain Gospel called According to the Hebrews (if one is willing to accept it, not as an authority, but for the interpretation of the proposed question), 'Another of the rich said to him, Teacher, what good thing do I need to do that I may live? He said to him, Man, do the law and the prophets. He responded to him, I have done that. He said to him, Go, sell all you possess and distribute it to the poor, and come, follow me. But the rich man began to scratch his head. The answer did not please him. The Lord said to him, How can you say, I have done the law and the prophets? It is written in the law, You shall love your neighbour as yourself, and behold many of your brothers, sons of Abraham, are covered with dung, and dying from hunger, and your house is full of many good things, yet none of those things at all are going out to them. And he turned and said to his disciple Simon, who was sitting with him, Simon, son of Jonah, it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.' It is true, therefore, that the rich man, who despised so many poor people and did not share anything from his abundant resources, did not fulfil the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. For it is impossible to fulfil the commandment which says, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', and to be rich, and especially to have so many possessions. The person, therefore, who does not think this word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', should be thrown out as false, but should be received as a true saying of the Lord will say, with not very clear argumentation, but superficial and not very rigorous, that our Lord wishing to argue that the rich man says things that are untrue as it were, because he says he has fulfilled even that commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, Go, sell all that you possess and give to the poor'; for thus you will clearly speak the truth, if you have loved or you love 'your neighbour as yourself'.

15 Now if someone takes human weakness into account and thinks this difficult for a human to fulfil and disdains the literal words and turns to an allegorical

understanding, let him hear the story of certain Greeks who, for the sake of the wisdom of the world, are related to have done what the Lord here commands the rich man to do. A certain Theban is said to have done it for the freedom of his soul and as an example of a simpler life. Wishing to show himself blessed to the Greeks and having no need 'of this world' he handed over all his substance to the people of Thebes. If, therefore, for the sake of the wisdom of the Greeks and a doctrine liberating the soul (as they thought), a Greek man could do this, how can he not do it more readily who desires to receive the perfection of Christ in himself? But if someone wishes to be convinced from the divine Scriptures that what Christ orders is possible, let him listen to the story from the Acts of the Apostles where it is written: 'And all who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and divided them as each one had need. And they remained together daily in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they received their food with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people'. And a little further it says again, 'And the heart and soul of the multitude of believers was one, and no one of them said anything was his own, but all things were common to them' and what follows.⁵⁰ In this passage the story of Ananias and Sapphira, his wife is introduced. They sold their 'farm' and secretly withheld some portion 'from the price' of the farm. Therefore, they suffered what they suffered, for they deserved to receive their sin of robbery in this age so that they might depart this life purer, purified by the punishment inflicted on them through the common death, because they were believers in Christ.

And I think that 'when Ananias heard these words', 'he fell down and expired' because he could not bear Peter's rebuke. Tormented to such a degree in himself, he was chastised so that he even expired, with Peter's words instructing his soul, of course.⁵¹ Nor ought we think here that Peter killed Ananias; rather he could not bear the sharpness of Peter's words when he said to him: 'Why has Satan filled your heart that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and embezzle from the price of the farm? When it remained, did it not remain yours, and when it was sold it was in your power? For what reason have you thought to do such a thing in your heart? You have not lied to humans but to God. When Ananias heard these words (it says) he fell down and expired.'⁵²

16 Someone can suitably ask, If he who has all the virtues is 'perfect' so that he does no evil, how is he 'perfect' who sells all 'his possessions and' gives 'to the poor'? For let us assume someone to have done this very thing: how will he also immediately become free from anger? And if it should turn out that he is free from anger, how will he also become free from grief? How also will he become free from fear, so that he does not fear either pain or death or any of those things whatsoever that can throw a more imperfect soul into confusion? How will one who has dispersed 'his goods to the poor' be without any lust?

⁵⁰ Acts 2:44-7; 4:32.

⁵¹ See Acts 5:3-5.

⁵² Ibid.

Then, since it is possible from the very fact that he hands over 'all his things' that he may experience a normal human reaction to his poverty and, sorry that he did it, he may desire to possess similar things. And if pleasure, defined as an irrational elevation of the soul, is a passion, how will someone immediately be set free from the passion of vain boasting as soon as he has handed over all 'his possessions to the poor'? And someone might go on to say further, How, from the fact that he has handed over 'his goods to the poor', can he also become wise and receive the wisdom of God so that he can give a reason to every person who asks him about the faith, or about all the things that have been said obscurely in the Scriptures? Or if, on this basis alone, we say someone becomes perfect even if he does not possess those things that we mentioned, we have arrived at irrationality since we say that someone is both perfect and at the same time, a sinner (for everyone is a sinner who is angry without cause, and who is made sad by the sorrow of the world, and who fears pain or death, and who desires what he does not have, and who is extolled for no reason as if he were in the midst of good things which are not good things). Or if we say that at the same time that he delivers his goods 'to the poor', he becomes, as it were, a receptacle of God to receive all the virtues and to put aside all evil, we speak in good faith (as a general designation), but I do not know if truthfully; and perhaps those who hear a solution like this will laugh at us as not speaking wisely.

17 One will appear to speak wisely perhaps who preserves the simplicity of the words and says nothing about them in a moral sense, if he shall thus respond as a faithful person and say that one who hands over 'his goods to the poor' is aided in his salvation by their prayers. He receives the spiritual abundance of those who suffer material need in relation to his spiritual need, as the apostle says when he writes to the Corinthians.⁵³ In this way, he becomes 'perfect', although he may have certain passions (because he is human), and perhaps some other person will have suffered this need and been given great assistance, since God hears the prayers of so many exhausted poor, who nevertheless are similar to the apostles (or somewhat inferior), poor in material things, like the apostles, but rich in spiritual things. So, that person who exchanges poverty for riches so that he may become perfect (believing the words of Christ) will be helped immediately just as the apostles of Christ, so that he may become wise in Christ, magnanimous, just, pure, and without any kind of passion at all. Nevertheless, we ought not thus understand that he became completely perfect on that very day or at that very time when he handed over 'his goods to the poor'. But subsequently, from that day the contemplation of God will begin to lead him to all the virtues, so that he may begin from that time to advance, like Isaac, because of the help of God which has been conferred on him, and he increases more and more day after day until he is made 'great', like Isaac, with the addition, 'very, very',⁵⁴ in every virtue, every evil, of course, having been

⁵³ See 2 Cor 8:14.

⁵⁴ See Gn 26:13.

torn away from his soul. And if anyone wishes to defend this exposition, let it not be thought that it says that a person becomes perfect by the simple fact of handing over 'his goods to the poor', while he fails in the other matters.

18 Another, however (perhaps abounding in faith and zeal for hurrying on to things that are subtler and to some loftiness of understandings that are distinctive and worthy of Christ), will leave behind the simplicity of the word and hurry on to a moral exposition, and say that the 'substance' of each soul is its activities after its exodus, so that the substance of the just is their good activities, and of the evil, their evil activities. This person will say, therefore, that he who had 'many possessions' was rich in symbolism of that person who possessed 'many' evil works, among which can be both the love of riches and the desire for glory and other earthly things that fill up his soul. Since it is possible, therefore, sometimes that one who is rich in this way abstains from certain evils such as homicide, adultery, theft, false testimony, and renders what is proper to his parents with a degree of honour. Someone can also be compassionate to 'neighbours' and, nevertheless, not 'perfect'. Therefore, when Christ counsels a man of this sort he orders him to sell all his evil 'substance' and, as it were, hand it over to the powers that cause it, which are paupers in every good thing, and for this reason do not suffer threat, as it is written, 'But the poor person does not suffer threat'.⁵⁵ But I know that that exposition will seem very forced. It gives a credible explanation of the things said about perfection, but it is not very persuasive when it says that someone who puts aside those things that are evils is understood to sell his substance and give 'to the poor'.

But I would say on such a passage, having anticipated it, as it were: The person who defends this exposition can say that a sinner is full of spirits commensurate to his sins. For example, a fornicator (according to what is said in the Scriptures) is filled with the spirit of fornication,⁵⁶ a raging person with the spirit of rage, and a slanderous person with a spirit of accusation. He who was evil and by participation in evil spirits became more copiously and variously involved in the evils themselves acquired that substance. And just as someone has acquired it by buying it with his own free will, since the evils pleased him greatly, so he sells it and gives it to such 'poor' as the word mentions, and relinquishes it because he believed the words of Christ. For just as the 'peace' of the apostles returned to them if there was no 'son of peace',⁵⁷ so fornication and sins in general are returned to the poor, who are the authors of sins, when there will be no one using their evils. And so there will be no doubt but that he should become 'perfect' who thus sells all his goods, as we have related it, and gives 'to the poor'. But also, if goods of this kind are sold over much time, and a long time is needed to give them to those whom I called 'the poor', it makes no difference; but it is in relation to the worth of the evils handed over to the

⁵⁵ Prv 13:8.

⁵⁶ See Hos 4:12; 5:4.

⁵⁷ Lk 10:6.

poor over time that the person who has done such becomes 'perfect'. And it is clear that he who has done such things 'should have treasure in heaven' and become heavenly himself. For 'such as is the earthly' (that is the wicked), 'such also are the earthly; and such as is the heavenly' (that is Christ), 'such also are the heavenly'.⁵⁸ He who wished to be 'perfect' and sold all his goods and gave 'to the poor' will, therefore, have 'treasure' in his part of heaven. But do not think that a man of this kind is found among the rich of this kind such as they are just now. For who of them has put aside love of riches and (if I may speak in this way) the love of the world; who in general has put aside the spirit of vain glory that in his heaven he might receive the treasure of the glory of God and the riches that are in every word of God and in all the wisdom of God? For who has put aside the spirit of lust and fear, or of anger or pleasure? Therefore, he who wishes to discuss this appropriately in relation to the exactness of the truth will report that this exists in the apostles and in those who will be like them. And such a person as that will be able to follow Christ, who (just as we said) sells all and has 'treasure in heaven'; for a person of this kind is not distracted by any evil possession to prevent him following Christ.

19 'But when the young man heard this word he departed, sorrowful, for he had many possessions'.⁵⁹ And consider (from a human standpoint) with what difficulty we are torn away from the goods of earthly riches or from the desire of vain glory. For because we love desire, we prefer to gain even those things that we consider evil over being set free from evil desires, and we are more interested in not falling upon those things we think are to be feared than in putting aside the destructive fear by the fear of God. But notice that some old man is not introduced in this passage, nor a man who has laid aside the things 'which are of a child',⁶⁰ but 'a young man' who, 'when he hears the word', departs 'sorrowful'. For he was 'a young man' in his soul, and for this reason, when he leaves Christ 'he departed' (for 'he departed' was said in criticism of him), 'and he departed sorrowful', grieved 'by the sorrow of the world',⁶¹ which works 'death'. 'For he had many possessions' which he loved. He loved to be angry, and to be sorrowful (for which reason he also 'departed sorrowful'), and he loved everything which the evil that had possession of his soul was giving birth to in him. And if you wish to understand the story according to the exposition of some, which we partially touched on above, you find this young man half praiseworthy and half blameworthy. He is praiseworthy in that he had not murdered, or committed adultery, or done any of those things the law prohibits but, still defined as a young man, he had honoured his 'father and mother'. On the other hand, he is blameworthy because he is sorrowful at the words of Christ which summon him to perfection and promise him that if he handed over all 'that he had', he would be made great.

⁵⁸ 1 Cor 15:48.

⁵⁹ Mt 19:22.

⁶⁰ See 1 Cor 13:11.

⁶¹ See 2 Cor 7:10.

20 And when he departed, 'Jesus said to his disciples, Truly I say to you that it will be difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.'⁶² Consequently, the saying of Christ must be considered very carefully because he did not say simply, 'A rich person will' not 'enter the kingdom of heaven'. Had he said this he would have excluded the rich from the kingdom of heaven without qualification. But in fact, he says, 'it will be difficult for a rich person to enter', making plain the difficulty, indeed, of the salvation of the rich, but not declaring it impossible for his power. From this very text, it is declared very clearly that it is possible for a rich person to resist his passions and sins; it is difficult, to be sure, but nevertheless, it is possible. But if we understand the rich person in the moral sense (in relation to what we said above), as one who has the collected substance of many evils, you will ask how, even with difficulty, a rich person will enter the kingdom of heaven. The proposed parable shows the difficulty each rich person has with the entrance to salvation, saying, 'It is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.'⁶³ In this parable a 'rich person' is compared to a camel not only because of the animal's uncleanness, as the law teaches,⁶⁴ but also because of the crookedness of its whole body, and 'the kingdom of heaven' is made like 'the eye of a needle' to demonstrate that the entrance of the kingdom of heaven is very narrow and flattened beyond measure. And it shows that just as it is impossible for 'a camel' in and of itself 'to enter through the eye of a needle', but it is possible so far as God is concerned, so also it is impossible that a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven by his own power, but it is possible as far as God is concerned, who is able by his ineffable power either to make the girth of the evils of an evil person thin or to make the narrowness of the entry wide for him. And that it is because of the difficulty of entry and not because it is impossible, that he takes the needle's eye and the 'camel' as an example is clear from the fact that he responds to the disciples (who say, 'Who then can be saved?'), 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'⁶⁵ It is possible, therefore, that 'a camel enter through the eye of a needle', not, however, 'with people', but with God. But how God might make this 'possible', He Himself knows, and His Christ, and to whom Christ may reveal it.

But the person who has advanced in wisdom and the word, will venture perhaps to explain more fully about both the needle and its eye. We, however, will add only this, that there are certain things which are made in the law by the craft of sewing, which needs a needle, so that in the wisdom of God one might do the work of the craft that he has received.⁶⁶ In whatever way, therefore, the works of sewing, and that needle, are understood, the sewing itself will grant us to understand what things ought to be understood in this passage. These things are perhaps beyond us to speak of and to clarify now, and perhaps will seem to have an inappropriate outcome even to a person who knows a great deal.

⁶² Mt 19:23.⁶³ Mt 19:24.⁶⁴ See Lev 11:4.⁶⁵ Mt 19:25, 26.⁶⁶ See Ex 27:16.

Regarding the two possibilities set forth: for 'a camel to enter through the eye of a needle', and for 'a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven', Jesus said the first is 'easier'. But investigate among people, one constituted a 'camel' entering through 'the eye of a needle', and another a 'rich person' entering 'the kingdom of heaven' (which is impossible so far as human beings are concerned but is possible so far as God is concerned). Whoever, then, is found to be a camel, and whatever the eye of a needle is understood to be, he will enter through that. I think Jesus introduced this parable because he wanted to show that the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven is easier than that of the wealthy Jews. In spiritual matters Gentiles were said to be poor and the Jews were rich. But let the person who can examine these matters examine whether these things show any purposes related to certain mysteries which lead to some purposes via certain ways possible for God alone, or not.

21 'Then Peter answered and said to him: Behold we have left everything and followed you; what, in that case, will we have?'⁶⁷ This can be interpreted both simply and morally. The person who wants to interpret it simply will say things like this: Just as in the case of gifts, God, does not look at the gift itself but at the affection of the giver, and justifies and receives the person who gives a small amount with great affection more than the one who gives large gifts from his abundance and does it with little affection (as is made clear from the words written because of the large gifts of the rich and the two mites of the widow⁶⁸). In the same way, one who left many things will not be more acceptable than one who left few things among those who abandon what they possess because of their love of God, that they might follow Christ inseparably and do all things in accordance with his word. Therefore, even if Peter and his brother left a few contemptible things when they both heard the words: 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men', and 'immediately having left their nets they followed him',⁶⁹ nevertheless they are not counted as few with God who considers that they left those few things out of a plenitude of love so that even if they had had 'many possessions', they would, without doubt, have left them all and they would not, by any means, have been held back or impeded from the impetus of a love like this. And I think that Peter, relying on his own affection more than the quantity itself of the things left behind, said confidently to Jesus: 'Behold we have left everything and followed you; what, in that case, will we have?' And it follows logically to think that he had perhaps left not only nets, but also house, wife, sons and certain possessions, even if small.

Something great, therefore, is shown about Peter and his brother, because when they heard, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men' without hesitating, 'they immediately left their nets and followed him.'⁷⁰ They did not imitate him who said: 'But first let me go and tell those who are in my house,'⁷¹

⁶⁷ Mt 19:27.

⁶⁸ See Mk 12:41-4.

⁶⁹ Mt 4:19-20.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Lk 9:61.

nor did they do anything like him who said, 'Permit me first to go and bury my father'.⁷² And note carefully that they were struck in a most honourable way and believed the command of Christ and his promises that when they leave their modest catch of fish they would be fishers of men for salvation, 'immediately having left their nets' and forgotten all their own things 'they followed him', that they might be made worthy to pose this question which Peter did, saying, 'Behold we have left everything and followed you.' Notice at the same time, that the occasion for this kind of question occurred for Peter from the fact that he heard the word of Christ when he said, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.' Then, because he watched the young man closely when he went away sorrowful because he preferred having 'many possessions' on earth to being 'perfect' in God, and noticed also the difficulty of the rich entering 'the kingdom of God', therefore, as if he himself had accomplished no easy thing in himself because he had left all and followed Jesus, he said: 'Behold we have left everything and followed you.' For this reason, Christ responded to Peter, who says these things boldly, with that greatest promise, that he would be one of the judges of Israel.⁷³

22 But because the simple meaning of the text is not suitable enough to satisfy the hearer with a nobler disposition about the dignity of the meaning existing in moral explanations, we will also explain this passage in the following way. Since the very thing Peter says, 'Behold we have left everything and followed you' is not so very much nor is it worthy of such a disciple to whom 'flesh and blood did not reveal' Jesus to be the Christ, the Son 'of the living God', 'but the heavenly Father', to whom also he had said, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the underworld will not prevail against it',⁷⁴ if he means that he has left his contemptible nets, or his humble house and life in poverty filled with suffering. Therefore, might those things which we explained above about the words of Christ who said, 'Go and sell all that you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me', be useful and true in the present passage? For Peter left 'all things' in which he was a sinner, on account of which he had also said, 'Depart from me, Lord, because I am a sinful man',⁷⁵ and it was great praise of his confidence that henceforth he had not sinned, who said, 'Behold, we have left all things', and not only have we left evil things, but we have also 'followed you'. But his statement, 'we have followed you', can refer to all the things that the Father revealed his Son to be to Peter. 'We have followed you' as justice insofar as you are justice; 'we have followed you' as sanctification insofar as you are sanctification, and wisdom, and peace, and truth, and the way leading to God, and true life.⁷⁶ Because of this, like a victorious athlete after the wrestling, he asks

⁷² Mt 8:21.⁷⁵ Lk 5:8.⁷³ See Mt 19:28.⁷⁶ See 1 Cor 1:30; Jn 14:6.⁷⁴ Mt 16:16-18.

the overseer of the contest what the prizes are for a contest like this which he still did not know. 'What then will we get?' And if we wish to comprehend what the promises are to Peter, let us, in a similar way, leave all things, so that henceforth we are held by no wickedness or by any of its works, but we follow the Word of God so that he may say to us and to all who follow him what he says in the words that follow: 'Truly I say to you, because you have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his majesty, you too will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'⁷⁷ This saying itself also has a simple interpretation exhorting one to leave the goods of the world for the sake of Christ, and a spiritual and more profound interpretation. The person, therefore, who wants to understand it according to the letter will say something like this: The statement said that not all follow Christ, but he designated those followers of himself, who at that time were apostles and those who, like them, had followed him resolutely. And he indicated subsequent followers by his statement, 'And all who have left brothers or sisters' and the other things.⁷⁸ Those, therefore, who 'have followed' Christ, and left not some things, but 'all things,' 'will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And they will receive this authority at the resurrection of the dead, for that is the regeneration and is constituted a sort of new birth when both a new heaven and a new earth is created for these who have renewed themselves, and a new covenant is delivered, and a new cup.⁷⁹

23 What Paul calls 'the washing of regeneration' is the initial phase of that regeneration, and 'the renewal of the Spirit' is the mystery of that newness.⁸⁰ And perhaps in relation to this birth 'no one is pure from filth, even if his life is one day,' on account of the mystery of our physical birth, in relation to which David says, in the person of all who are born of flesh and blood, 'I was conceived in iniquity, and my mother conceived me in sin.'⁸¹ But in relation to the regeneration of baptism, everyone is 'pure from filth,' who has been reborn 'of water and spirit,' but, if I may speak boldly, he is pure 'through a mirror darkly.'⁸² Concerning the third regeneration, however, 'when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his glory,' everyone who enters into that regeneration which is in Christ, will be perfectly clean 'from filth' and will see 'face to face,'⁸³ and he comes to that regeneration 'through the washing of regeneration.' And if you wish to understand that washing, understand how John, baptizing 'in water to repentance' says of the Saviour that 'he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.'⁸⁴

In that regeneration of baptism, therefore, we are buried with Christ; 'for we are buried with him,' according to the apostle, 'in baptism.'⁸⁵ But in the regeneration of that baptism which will be in Spirit and in fire, we are made conformed

⁷⁷ Mt 19:28.⁷⁸ Mt 19:29.⁷⁹ See Rev 21:1; Mk 14:22-5.⁸⁰ See Tit 3:5.⁸¹ Job 14:4, 5; Ps 50:7.⁸² See Jn 3:5; 1 Cor 13:1.⁸³ 1 Cor 13:12.⁸⁴ Mt 3:11.⁸⁵ Rom 6:4.

'to the body of the glory' of Christ who sits 'on the seat of his glory', and ourselves 'seated on the twelve thrones', if, moreover, we leave 'all things' (according to each interpretation offered above, but especially according to the second) and follow Christ.⁸⁶ And then, 'when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his glory', the prophecy is fulfilled which says, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.'⁸⁷ And then 'he must reign until God puts all his enemies under his feet', until 'the last enemy, death' is destroyed, at which destruction death will be no more, but only life which is believed.⁸⁸ For so long as death exists in the presence of human beings life is not believed in by those who are held by death, but when death has been destroyed life is believed by all. Something like this is placed in the law in these words: 'I have placed before you life and death', likewise: 'Your life will be suspended before your eyes', and, 'You do not believe in your life.'⁸⁹ But 'the Son of Man' will sit 'on the seat of his glory', when no one contemptible and inglorious will be in his kingdom; for then all who have not accepted 'glory from men' nor have done anything that they might be glorified 'by men', but have sought only glory which is from God will be ruled by him who shall sit 'on the seat of his glory'.⁹⁰ Then, too, the prayer of Christ will be fulfilled which he prayed and said, 'Father, glorify me with that glory that I had with you before the world came into existence.'⁹¹

24 And if you can understand the Word restored, after he had become flesh and became all the things, whatever they were, each one needed him to become for himself, so that he might gain all,⁹² and afterwards being restored so that he becomes what he was 'in the beginning with God' (for the Word was God)⁹³ in his glory as the Word, therefore, you will see him 'seated on the seat of his glory', when you shall understand that the Son of Man is no other than him who was thought to be a man in relation to the body. And at that time, when these things shall have taken place in the restoration of the Saviour, and those who left 'everything' and followed him, since they have been conformed 'to his body', the seat of his 'glory',⁹⁴ will sit 'on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'. For the entire life of the just will judge 'the twelve tribes of Israel' which have not believed; the apostles will judge along with those who have imitated the life of the apostles, and they will judge those of noble birth based on the fact that they are 'Israel', but they have not acted in ways worthy of their descent. And perhaps the apostle's statement, 'The world shall be judged by you',⁹⁵ is addressed to those who have come from the Gentiles, but what he says, 'You will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' is said to the apostles and to those who have imitated the apostolic life, who will judge Israel, and who are held in higher esteem than the entire world.

⁸⁶ See Phil 3:21; Mt 19:28.⁸⁷ Ps 109(110):1.⁸⁸ See 1 Cor 15:25, 26.⁸⁹ Dt 30:15; 28:66.⁹⁰ See Jn 5:41; Mt 6:2; Jn 5:44.⁹¹ Jn 17:5.⁹² See 1 Cor 9:19.⁹³ Jn 1:2, 1.⁹⁴ See Phil 3:21.⁹⁵ 1 Cor 6:2.

25 If anyone, then, shall have left 'everything' and followed Jesus, he will also receive what is promised to Peter. And if he did not leave 'everything', but certain things which are specified further down in the text, this person will receive numerous things and will possess eternal life according to the saying: 'And everyone who shall have left brothers, or sisters, or parents, or sons, or field, or house because of my name, will receive a hundredfold and in the future will possess eternal life.'⁹⁶ And every person will acknowledge that this does not contain a contemptible procedure even in the straightforward instruction which exhorts that every fleshly relationship and all worldly substance is to be despised, since many believers in Christ have been hated by their parents and have chosen to reject them and all their substance, so that they may possess 'eternal life', believing that 'everyone who shall have left brothers' according to the flesh, and 'sisters' of the flesh, and their fleshly 'parents' and 'sons', and 'fields' on the earth which is cursed, and 'houses' on it, and 'shall have left' them for no other reason than 'because of the name' of Christ, 'will receive numerous things'. For one receives 'numerous things', and (if one must name them in this way) 'numerous things' of the spirit which are inestimably more than those of the flesh, and in addition, beyond what he receives, he will receive 'numerous things' not in this transitory life, but when he has come to be in that eternal life. It is easy to explain the numerous 'brothers' and 'sisters', for even in this age he has found many 'brothers' in the faith for the brothers in the flesh whom he has left on account of infidelity. So also, anyone who has left parents because they were unbelieving finds all the irreproachable bishops⁹⁷ and presbyters appointed without reproach as parents. In the same way, he also finds as 'sons' all who are the age of sons. But we cannot propose in the same way how he is understood to find numerous 'fields or houses' for those which he left.

All, therefore, who have presented themselves to Christ as pure virgins⁹⁸ among the angels are 'brothers' and 'sisters' (in my opinion), as those who still inhabit the earth, so those who already live in heaven. And parents are said to be such as Abraham: 'But you will go to your fathers in peace, cherished in a good old age.'⁹⁹ And if at some time these shall become (in relation to those fathers) fathers of others, they will also receive numerous 'children'. And understand with me the numerous 'fields' and 'houses' to be in that repose of paradise and the city of God of which 'glorious things are spoken', 'in whose bastions God is discerned when he defends it', so that it may be said to those who possess 'houses' there: 'Just as we have heard, so also have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God', of which it is said: 'Apportion his bastions.'¹⁰⁰ And in addition to all these things he will possess 'eternal life'.

⁹⁶ Mt 19:29.

⁹⁹ Gn 15:15.

⁹⁷ See 1 Tim 3:2.

¹⁰⁰ See Ps 86:3; 47:4, 9, 14.

⁹⁸ See 2 Cor 11:2.

26 'Many who are first will be last, and who are last will be first'.¹⁰¹

This saying contains some things even in the simple sense capable of encouraging those who have recently assented to the divine word that they hasten through those things which have been appointed to human beings to ascend to perfection before many who appear to be old in the faith, since neither time nor unbelieving parents impede these who newly assent to the word and life which is superior to those. Such a meaning can also both destroy and extol those who are glorified because they have been nurtured by Christian parents in Christianity itself, especially if they should be from fathers and ancestors judged worthy of a priestly seat, that is, a bishop, or presbyter, or the rank of deacon among the people of God. For when they hear that 'many who are first will be last and the last first' they will remember that they should not boast in the fact that they seem to be prior, nor should they be abased and become timid as if they possess something less than those who were prior because they received the teachings of Christianity last. The saying also has another meaning. It means that the Israelites are indeed first, who have become last because of their unbelief and their treachery against Christ, and the Gentiles who were last have become first if, moreover, they continue in the faith, 'not minding high things, but condescending to the humble'.¹⁰² And if the Gentiles, share in the root of the patriarchs and the rich word of the fathers, they shall be planted together in accordance with what has been put forth in the spiritual law and in accordance with the will of the prophets (and they too are understood spiritually like the law), since the Israelites, of course, have been cut off from the good olive tree because of their unbelief.¹⁰³ For since Christ comes 'in judgement' into this world, that the Gentiles who did not see might see, and the Israelites 'who see' 'might become blind' because of unbelief,¹⁰⁴ we, as proselytes, ascending through faith have become 'above' and 'first', and the Israelites who were first have become last, falling by means of their unbelief.¹⁰⁵ The following statement is also understood in the same way: 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last',¹⁰⁶ as if he should say that now those from the Gentiles who believe in me receive the first place, who are thought to be last among the Israelites, and all Israelites will be judged to be last by God, even if they appear first 'because of the time'.¹⁰⁷ If, then, anyone wants to become truly first let him become a part of those whom the Israelites now consider to be last. But whoever wishes to be among those who appear to be first will be reckoned among the last since the first place has passed to the Gentiles. But pay careful attention to what the Word says. 'Many' (it says) 'who are first will be last', not all who are 'first will be last', nor all who are 'last' will be 'first'. For there are those who were first and nonetheless remain first, such as the apostles of Christ who were Israelites from the seed of Abraham, who even now are held to be first; and there are those who were last who remain last nonetheless, who conduct their

¹⁰¹ Mt 19:30.

¹⁰⁵ See Dt 28:43.

¹⁰² Rom 12:16.

¹⁰⁶ Mk 9:34.

¹⁰³ See Rom 11:17.

¹⁰⁷ See Heb 5:12.

¹⁰⁴ See Jn 9:39.

lives in a way that is improper for Christian people and appear to be of the church when they are not.

27 And furthermore, see if you can say that the race of angels is first, since they are more honourable than the race of human beings who appear to be last in comparison with the angels. For as it is written in Job, 'When the stars were made all his angels praised God';¹⁰⁸ as if they were more ancient and honourable not only than human beings after they were created, but also than every creature created for the sake of human beings. And thus, someone will dare say many of the angels who were 'prior' to human beings were made 'inferior' to some human beings, and many of the human beings who are last by nature are made superior to some angels by means of the angelic life and the Word of God. These were indeed appointed first, but were made last because of certain faults. And understand the writing of the apostle in relation to these things which says, 'Or do you not know that we will judge angels, much less things of this life?'¹⁰⁹ But Jude also says that God 'has kept in heavy chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day' 'the angels of God who did not preserve their principality but forsook their own habitation'.¹¹⁰ Consider, then if, so long as they 'preserved their principality' and did not forsake 'their own habitation' they were not superior to human beings and were the 'first' of human beings whose 'soul was humbled to the dust' and who were made into a body of humiliation so that they might scarcely say at any time, 'I am a miserable man; who will free me from the body of this death?'¹¹¹ And the human beings who were 'last' in comparison to the angels were made superior to those angels who did not preserve 'their principality' but forsook 'their own habitation'. These human beings receive a principality in accordance with what is written: 'Let him have authority over ten cities' or 'over five cities'.¹¹² Therefore, although they were made with a habitation, some of the angels forsook it, and human beings were made first if, when the kingdom of heaven was preached to them, they did what they could to lift themselves up to that habitation which the angels had forsaken. And many of the last, who were born on earth and ascend so that they can confidently say: 'But our citizenship is in heaven',¹¹³ are made 'first'. And he too who fell like lightening 'from heaven' was first,¹¹⁴ when he walked blameless in all his ways, until iniquity was found in him and he was made last, descending to the underworld, so that those seeing him were amazed and said: 'You too have been destroyed just as us, and have been counted among us. And your honour and your great delight have descended to the underworld'.¹¹⁵ Thus, while everyone who was foolish and unbelieving, serving 'various pleasures and desires', living 'in evil and envy, hateful and hating',¹¹⁶ should be last, they became, nonetheless, first when 'the goodness and

¹⁰⁸ Job 38:7.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Cor 6:3.

¹¹⁰ Jude 6.

¹¹¹ Ps 43:26; Rom 7:24.

¹¹² See Lk 19:17, 19.

¹¹³ Phil 3:20.

¹¹⁴ See Lk 10:18.

¹¹⁵ See Is 14:10, 11.

¹¹⁶ Tit 3:3.

kindness of our Lord and Saviour appeared through the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit' and they received him who said, 'He who receives me receives him who sent me'.¹¹⁷

But we have related in this connection that they are first indeed who are saved, and last who do not deserve so excellent a rank as that of the saved, but deserve punishment, so that they are forsaken either 'until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have entered' or until they have completed what they deserve for their own sins.¹¹⁸ The parable that follows those words, however, indicates that even the last are to be saved. They, indeed, worked first, but received their pay last and, therefore, although they had been first, they were considered last, and he says that those who were called last to the work were better than them. And they not only received their pay first, but it was also equal to those who murmured against the householder and said: 'Those last worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the weight and heat of the day'.¹¹⁹ And those who were called last to the work are called 'first' because they received their pay first.

28 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. And he agreed with the workers for a denarius a day and sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace and he said to them: You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you what is just. And they went. And he went out again about the sixth and ninth hour and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and he said to them: Why are you standing here idle the entire day? They say to him, Because no one has hired us. He said to them: You also go into my vineyard, and you will receive what is just. And when it was late the master says to his manager of the vineyard: Call the workers and pay them their wage, beginning from the last up to the first. When, then, those who had come about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. And when the first came they thought that they would receive more, and they each received a denarius. And when they received it they murmured against the householder saying, These last worked one hour and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day. He said to one of them: Friend, I do you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go. But I wish also to give to this last just as I also give to you. Or is it not allowed that I do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So, the last will be first and the first last; for many are called, but few are chosen'.¹²⁰

It seems, indeed, that this whole parable has been undertaken so that we might learn how those who come 'last' to the work have received their pay 'first' as if they were called first, and how those who were called 'first' have been

¹¹⁷ Tit 3:4, 5; Mt 10:40.

¹¹⁸ Rom 11:25.

¹¹⁹ Mt 20:11.

¹²⁰ Mt 20:1-16.

considered in the last place because they also received their pay last. And we ought to know that since a parable of Jesus ('in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden'¹²¹) will be discussed, so many teachings of wisdom hidden in a mystery¹²² will be found in these words by those who can find such things that the Saviour might say especially of this parable: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things put forward from the beginning', and: 'I will bring forth things hidden from the foundation of the world.'¹²³ The person who wants to understand the parable must perceive what the day is which is referred to in it, what its hours are, and that it was not by accident that the householder delivered the work of his vineyard to five series of workers. Next the person capable of investigating must investigate the reason some workers were hired early in the morning and after this, others were hired not about the second hour, but 'about the third hour', and after they were hired, others not about the fourth hour and the fifth, but 'about the sixth hour', accordingly others not about the seventh or eighth, but 'about the ninth', and lastly, others not about the tenth, but the 'eleventh'. For there ought to be some reason worthy of Jesus why a brief time is assumed between early morning and the third hour, and not following the times which are posited between the third and sixth or between the sixth and ninth, and after this why there is one hour between the ninth and eleventh, as previously between early morning and the third hour. And one must not carelessly consider why the householder expressly made an agreement for a 'denarius a day' with the workers whom he hired 'early', but with those hired 'about the third hour' he did not expressly establish a particular wage, but said: 'I will give you whatever is just'. He did the same also with those called 'about the sixth hour and the ninth', and he said to those who were called 'about the eleventh' hour and excused themselves for their idleness the entire day: 'You also go into the vineyard'. But one must also consider that it is as if the householder is placed outside the vineyard and there finds the first 'workers' he sent 'into the vineyard', and to the second group he said: 'You also go into the vineyard', and likewise the same word also to those who were called 'about the eleventh' hour: 'You also go into the vineyard'. And let the person who is able understand what the marketplace is in which Jesus found the second group 'standing' idle. Likewise, we must ask who they are who are found standing 'about the eleventh' hour to whom 'he says': 'Why have you stood here idle the whole day?' And let someone consider what the excuse is of those who stood 'idle the whole day' and what anguish those standing might have suffered who endured standing 'idle the whole day', that they might respond with confidence, that they were indeed prepared to work but 'no one hired them': as if there might be many who might be hired, but not also many who hire.

29 And it is also necessary to look carefully at the fact that 'when it was late' the master said 'to his manager of the vineyard: Call the workers and pay their

¹²¹ Col 2:3.

¹²² See 1 Cor 2:7.

¹²³ Ps 77:2; Mt 13:35.

wage, beginning from the last up to the first'. And you shall ask what moved the master 'of the vineyard' to order the manager to call 'the workers' and pay them their wage, beginning 'from the last' and going 'up to the first', so that those who were hired 'about the eleventh' hour receive it first, and second, those who were hired 'about the ninth', and third, those 'about the sixth', and fourth those who were hired 'about the third', but last those who were hired 'early'. For this is stated very clearly because he says: 'Pay the wage, beginning from the last up to the first'. But who, in addition to the master 'of the vineyard' would be the master's manager who gives 'the wage' at the master's command? But also, if those who had been called 'about the ninth' hour did not bear 'the burden and heat of the day', it is clear that they did not 'murmur against the householder saying: These last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the burden and heat of the day'. Neither did those who were called the sixth hour bear 'the burden of the day', but perhaps half 'a day'. And those who were called the third hour did not endure 'the burden' of the whole 'day', but (if it is necessary to speak cautiously) half 'a day' and the fourth part 'of a day'. But only those who were hired early endured the whole 'burden and heat of the day', and the others bore what they did in the vineyard with respect to a measure of time.

30 And since various parables have mentioned a vineyard, one must ask whether the vineyard is understood in relation to various things or to the same thing. I think it is also necessary to discuss why the householder did not respond to all who went first and thought 'that they would receive more' and murmured 'against the householder', but 'he said to only one of them: Friend, I am not wronging you; did I not agree with you for a denarius', and: 'I wish to give to this last as I also give to you'. And because this present parable takes up such subjects someone can indeed investigate it; but no one deserves to speak about it except one who has said: 'But we have the mind of Christ'.¹²⁴

31 Come let us who fall far short of the profundity of the parable make a few statements regarding what we have contemplated in it. First, let us think about the day of the parable, what day it might be. And consider if we can say that this whole present age is one day. How long it would be, indeed, for us! But for the life of God the Father and Christ and the Holy Spirit it would be a short and trifling amount of time. And why do I mention how much in relation to the life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Perhaps the how much applies also to the life of certain blessed and sublime powers in comparison with the race of the majority. For so long as this one day is in relation to the life of human beings who live a long time, so long is this whole age in relation to the life of the celestial powers. And if it is so long as the time in relation to the life of the celestial powers, now consider how insignificant the length of this

¹²⁴ 1 Cor 2:16.

whole age is in the life of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And let one who is able investigate whether or not some such mystery is indicated in the song in Deuteronomy in which it says: 'Remember the days of the age.'¹²⁵ And if such are the days of the age, it will follow to understand that the statement contains a similar teaching which says: 'And I had the eternal years in mind, and I meditated; at night I was engaged with my heart, and afflicted in respect to my spirit. And I said: God will not cast out into the ages, will he?'¹²⁶ And perhaps (to speak boldly) 'God will not' indeed 'cast out into the ages' (for it is a long time for God to cast out even into one age), but he will, perhaps, also cast out into a second age when certain sins are forgiven 'neither in this age nor in the future one.'¹²⁷

Who, then, is sufficient to refer those six days and the seventh of rest to days of this kind, and after the Sabbath also the new moons and the festivities in the first month and the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month and to the other days of unleavened bread? And someone who thus follows the argument will fall into an abyss of meanings, conceiving the other festivities in relation to days of this kind, and the whole Sabbatical year in which God gives to the poor, the foreigners, and the beasts of the earth the fruits produced at the time of the first cultivation of the earth since no one will cultivate the earth at this time.¹²⁸ And I say abyss because of the spiritual height of the doctrines, so that someone might ascend and see the fiftieth year and the things that are appointed and fulfilled about it in the Law.¹²⁹ But when we investigate one day of the proposed parable and think that it is this whole present age, we enter heights needing the Spirit of God who 'searches all things, even the heights of God.'¹³⁰ And I think that just as certain things are said to have to happen at the end of the consummation of the year, so also (for example) 'at the consummation of' many 'ages', or some year of those completed, or something else, our Jesus 'appeared for the casting down of sin,'¹³¹ so that, after the consummation of the ages as if of one year of days, some other beginning might follow, and 'God might show in the ages to come the surpassing riches of his goodness' in those whom he knew it was necessary to show it. We have said these things because of the day mentioned in the present parable, which one can confirm also from the Epistle of John where he speaks as follows: 'Little children, it is the last hour, and just as you have heard that the antichrist will come, now many antichrists have appeared, whence we know that it is the last hour.'¹³² For the last hour follows 'the eleventh' in which the householder 'went out and found others standing, and said to them: Why have you stood here idle the whole day?'

³² Next let us ask how it is not by chance that the householder delivers the labours of his vineyard to five orders of workers: first 'when he goes out early',

¹²⁵ Dt 32:7.

¹²⁶ Ps 76:6-8.

¹²⁷ Mt 12:32.

¹²⁸ See Lev 25:6-7.

¹²⁹ See Lev 25.

¹³⁰ 1 Cor 2:10.

¹³¹ Heb 9:26.

¹³² 1 Jn 2:18.

second when 'he goes out about the third hour and sees others standing idle in the marketplace', the third time and fourth when 'again about the sixth and ninth hour he went out and did likewise', and the 'fifth, about the eleventh when he goes out and finds others standing'. And see if you can say that the first order was Adam in the beginning of the creation of the world and those who existed at that time, that they might work the 'vineyard' of the worship of God, and the second order was Noah and the covenant that was put in place in relation to him with those who existed at that time, and the third was Abraham and those fathers who came after him up to Moses, and the fourth was Moses and all those who came out of Egypt and the legislation which was made in the desert, and the last order is the advent of Christ. Nevertheless, one man, the householder, (so far as this parable is concerned) went out five times and came to the affairs of this world so that he might send workers teaching unashamedly the 'word of truth'¹³³ into his vineyard to attend to his works.

33 For if Christ (who has condescended many times to human beings) is always in charge of the calling of workers, let the person who is capable investigate also if the five orders of workers introduced to perform the works contain some mystery from the world of sense perception and from sensation which arises. And let one do the exercise even if he does not wish to accept the teachings and what we are saying. For someone will say that touch is involved in the first calling because of what 'the woman said to the serpent', that 'God said: You shall not eat of it nor shall you touch it', and the sense of smell in the second because of what was said to Noah: 'And the Lord smelled the sweet smell'. Taste is involved in the calling of Abraham because he feeds the angels and serves them hidden [or as it is in Latin: bread baked beneath the ashes] loaves of fine wheat flour and the tender calf. And in the case of Moses it is hearing, when the voice of God became audible from heaven. But it is vision, which is the most honourable of all the senses, that is indicated in the advent of Christ when they saw Christ with blessed eyes. And let us say these things in view of the five callings, whether for the sake of a rational exercise or someone wishes to accept them as teachings.

34 And I think that also the works of the vineyard were of such a kind that they needed workers in relation to the hours. For it was necessary that works occur in the vineyard as soon as it was morning, and the householder who called the workers saw who they were who were fit for the works which needed to be done the first thing in the morning. But there was another work 'about the third hour' that was in the days from Noah up to Abraham when the covenant was arranged with him. Thus, there were ten generations from Noah up to Abraham who was the beginning of another work that was more outstanding, and Abraham was the first worker of the vineyard at that time. And after him

¹³³ 2 Tim 2:15.

Moses and those who were with him were received into the vineyard. But some last work of the vineyard was wanting, which had to have a new calling, performing briefly the works in the vineyard which were wanting. This is the work of the new covenant. We know, therefore, the intervals of the callings 'about the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh' hours, in which the interval was as great from the ninth hour of Moses up to the 'eleventh' in which the advent of the physical Christ occurs, as it was from the first hour of Adam up to the third of Noah. And the householder agreed with these who were called at the first hour of 'morning' for a denarius. And I think this is the coin of salvation, since the things that are related to glory are not joined with it simultaneously. For I think that the denarius is the name of salvation, and there are glories that supersede the denarius. Thus, somewhere the coins are mentioned of him who magnified the mina given to him into five minas or into ten. But he who says to these who were called 'about the third' hour: 'I will give you what is just', has encouraged 'the workers' of the third hour to do everything that they can, but he has reserved judgement in relation to the work done that he might pay a just wage. And that 'he did likewise' also with those who came 'about the sixth and ninth' hours is clear because he also said to them: 'I will give you what is just'. And those who wished to apply themselves to the work, working vigorously for a shorter time, were able to do work in the vineyard equal to those who worked from 'morning', because they had not worked previously. But someone will ask why he thus says to them, as if they were not only idle but also had stood 'the entire day', that is throughout the whole time that preceded the eleventh hour, in relation to which it is written that the householder 'going out about the eleventh hour, said to them: Why have you stood idle the whole day?' Now I surmise that there is also a secret analogy of the soul hidden in these words. In what way were those, who confidently defend themselves by saying: 'Because no one hired us', at leisure 'the whole day' up to the eleventh hour, wishing to be working but not being received into the vineyard? But we, becoming suspicious regarding certain things like this from many Scriptures in addition to the present parable, dare to say that we may show how they stood 'idle the whole day', because no one hired those who were called 'about the eleventh hour'.

35 But let those who are not pleased with these teachings interpret for us that 'entire day' and those who stood 'idle the whole day' wishing indeed to work but not being called 'into the vineyard', and the fact that they confidently defended themselves and said: 'No one hired us'. For if the soul is sown together with the body, how did they stand 'idle the whole day'? Or let them tell us what that whole day is and the differing callings of workers in relation to the differing hours. And whether those hired by the householder in the parable were blessed, and there were also other workers who were hired, either by other householders or by himself and they were either not blessed or not so blessed,

is beyond us to understand in a worthy manner or to believe in relation to what we understand. I ask also what is outside 'the vineyard' where the workers were found by him who went out 'to hire' them. And consider if perhaps it is the place of souls prior to the body, which is the place outside 'the vineyard', and the vineyard is not only here in the body, but is also outside the body, where the workers work. For the souls of the workers hired in the field by the householder are not at leisure when they have been set free from the body. Samuel, therefore, was at work outside the body prophesying, and Jeremiah praying 'for the people'.¹³⁴ For this reason we strain and work 'the vineyard', 'whether placed in the body or absent from the body'¹³⁵ to receive 'what shall be just'. And there is no one (so far as this parable is concerned) who does not do the works of the vineyard who, nevertheless, has been dispatched into it; for the householder does not reproach anyone for having done less work, although he reproves those expecting a greater or lesser wage. And perhaps the place which is outside 'the vineyard', is the marketplace where they were standing 'idle', having a great defence for deserving the wage of a whole 'day' in the fact that they defended themselves saying, 'No one hired us'. The householder freely hired them and (if I may put it this way) paid them a 'wage' because they had stood bravely 'the whole day' and had waited for an employer up to the evening.

After this, 'when it was evening', that is at the end of the age and of that day which is referred to in the parable, 'the Lord says' 'to his manager' of the vineyard, either to some angel who has been appointed over wages to be bestowed, or to some manager of the many managers, in accord with the words, the heir is 'under overseers and administrators' during which time 'he is a child'.¹³⁶ At the command of the householder, then, the workers are called by the manager that he might give the wages to the last first; for the first workers, 'having the testimony through faith did not receive the promise of God' 'that they not be perfected without us', the householder 'looking forward to something better for us' who were called at the eleventh hour.¹³⁷ And we have obtained mercy because we stood 'the whole day' and wanted an employer to come to us, but we were idle, and with our defence we were accepted for the work and having obtained mercy we who are friends of Christ hope to receive our 'wage' first. And after us, he will give their 'wage' to those who worked before us, and so also to those who preceded them, and in this way up 'to the first'. And when one sees that place where Samuel sojourned and thereupon reflects on those who were hired before the eleventh hour, he will see how those first bore 'the burden and heat of the day', but we who were called at the 'eleventh' hour have not borne 'the burden and heat of the day' as those did, but we have borne a 'burden' because we stood 'idle' before the householder came to us, who said: 'Come to me all you who labour and are burdened'.¹³⁸ For the idleness itself

¹³⁴ See 1 Kgs (Sam) 28; 2 Macc 15:14.

¹³⁶ See Gal 4:2, 1.

¹³⁵ See 2 Cor 5:9.

¹³⁷ Heb 11:39, 40.

¹³⁸ Mt 11:28.

was a burden, plus the fact that meanwhile they were not judged worthy for the work of the vineyard. But they who were called before the eleventh hour bore 'the heat', each one according to the reckoning of his calling. And the 'first', unaware of the dignity of the householder and that they ought not murmur against him, thought that they should receive something more than the salvation the last receive, and 'murmured against the householder' grudging us last hired who served 'one hour' up to the end and were made like those who were called to the divine vineyard at the beginning of the day. But the householder 'said to one of them' (perhaps Adam): 'Friend, I am not doing you an injury; did I not agree with you for a denarius? Take what is yours' (for salvation is yours, which is the denarius) 'and go'; but 'I wish to give' also 'to that' last 'as also to you'. He did not say: to those last, but he indicates someone, one person of outstanding merit whom it is presumptuous to name, nevertheless one can credibly think of the apostle Paul, who worked 'one hour' and perhaps surpasses all who preceded him, as he himself testifies saying, 'But I laboured more than all of them.'¹³⁹

And if one must also say something about 'the vineyard', by taking a lead from the Master himself who gave an interpretation of the 'vineyard' in another parable, we will say that the vineyard is the kingdom of God. These are his very words: 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth its fruits.'¹⁴⁰ All, therefore, who do the works of the 'vineyard', performing works of the kingdom of God and worthy of salvation, 'will obtain a denarius'.

36 But after we dictated these words on this present parable the following thoughts also occurred to us which can be useful to those who are advancing in the more profound and hidden exposition. For someone will say that the entire life of a human being is one day according to this parable. This, therefore, is what is meant: one person begins to perform the works of the kingdom of God in childhood prior to youth and these are those who are hired in the vineyard first in the morning, others come to the worship of God in youth and are those who are invited at the third hour, but others come as adults, and these are those who are called 'at the sixth' hour, and still others are led to the worship of God as seniors, and they are those who are called 'about the ninth' hour, and others full of age and at the point of death are those who are called 'about the eleventh' hour. Since, therefore, the intention, not the time that someone has worked in the faith, is being contemplated, therefore, from what time someone was called is not being looked at but how much someone has worked and, for this reason the wage of salvation is given to all equally. Therefore those who have been faithful from childhood, who have laboured and have subjugated their youth and have borne 'the heat' of their entire impetuous

¹³⁹ 1 Cor 15:10.

¹⁴⁰ Mt 21:43.

lifetime and 'the burden' of the attacks of temptations, are indignant if they are to have equal salvation with those idle in the worship of God from childhood up to old age who, being at leisure in unbelief have come to faith and the works of faith a short time ago.

37 And we understand the vineyard in this exposition to be the kingdom of God which is preached in the church. And the marketplace is whatever is outside the 'vineyard', that is, outside the church of Christ, outside the Word of truth, whence the word of the Lord takes those who are called by Christ and sends 'into the vineyard', that is, into the church. And, according to this exposition, those are not numbered among the 'workers' of the vineyard, although they were indeed called first to the worship of God, but not preserving what they were in the faith, they were conquered and departed from the vineyard, that is from the church of God or from the faith 'of the truth'¹⁴¹ or from the justice of the kingdom of heaven, sinning, even if after the fulfilment of their pleasures in sins they wish, as if they were penitents, again to do the work of the vineyard from the beginning. For they cannot say to the householder: 'No one hired us', for they were hired at the first time when they were called to the faith. But neither will it be said to them: 'Why have you stood here idle all day?' This is especially so if 'beginning with the Spirit', they later finish with 'the flesh', and if they later wish to return so that they may live again in the Spirit. We have not made these statements to dissuade those from getting up who have fallen, or to impede those who have turned away so that they may not turn back, or so that the lascivious sons who, by living luxuriously, have consumed the substance of Gospel teaching may not return to the father's house.¹⁴² For because of their repentance, since they were conquered by a wicked life, let them have a consolation of salvation that is better than those who have been grasped in sins. Nevertheless, we ought not to think that they are like those who sinned in their youth because they had not yet learned what belonged to faith. Therefore, the householder wishes 'to give a denarius' of salvation to the last 'as also' to the first, since 'it is lawful for him' to do what he wishes 'with' his 'own things', and to censure him who has an evil eye because the householder is good. Many, therefore, of those called last 'will be first' and indeed many of the first 'last'; for also 'many are called, but few' are found 'chosen.'¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ See 2 Thess 2:13.

¹⁴² See Lk 15:13, 18–20.

¹⁴³ Mt 22:14.

Book 16 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 20:17–21:22

1 'And when Jesus was going up to Jerusalem he took his twelve disciples aside on the way and said to them: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, beaten, and crucified, and on the third day he will arise.'¹

Paul, who exhorts us to become imitators of himself just as he has imitated Christ,² did something similar, knowing that Christ, very courageously had ascended 'to Jerusalem' through the midst of these obvious dangers to be encountered, foreknowing that 'he was to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes' and was to be condemned 'to death' and was to be handed over 'to the Gentiles for mocking, beating, and crucifixion'. For when Agabus had taken his 'girdle' and bound his own hands and feet saying: 'Thus says the Holy Spirit: The Jews will thus bind the man whose girdle this is in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over into the hands of the Gentiles',³ Paul, on hearing those words, very courageously went up 'to Jerusalem' in imitation of his Master.⁴ And when he experienced the human emotion of those who began to weep and restrain him 'that he not go up to Jerusalem', because they loved him, he said: 'What are you doing weeping and breaking my heart? I am prepared not only to be bound but also to die for our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁵ Examining these words assiduously and knowing that we are to undergo some deceptive trials, we ought to offer ourselves to encounter the trials according to what is right, taking our example first from the Saviour, and then from his apostle. And you should not think that these things are contradictory to those that we mentioned earlier, that 'If someone shall have persecuted you in that city, flee to another', and that the Lord, hearing 'that John had been handed over' to prison,

¹ Mt. 20:17–19.

² See 1 Cor 11:1.

³ Acts 21:11.

⁴ See Acts 21:12–15.

⁵ Acts 21:13.

'withdrew' from there.⁶ But we must know that it is not always appropriate to avoid dangers, nor always to meet dangers; nevertheless it belongs to a certain wisdom in Christ that one should know what sort of time requires averting and what sort requires the encounter of dangers. We have said these things in relation to the intention of the present Scripture, exhorting people sometimes to despise the dangers of death.

2 Next, we must notice that 'when Jesus goes up to Jerusalem,' 'he takes the twelve aside,' and if Judas was also still among 'the twelve,' then he still (perhaps) deserved to be taken 'aside' with the others and to hear what the Master was to suffer. And I do not reject the idea that Judas still did not know what he was to do, just as none of us does (for it is said to all of us: 'Do not boast in tomorrow, for you do not know what the coming day will bring forth'). For I do not think the 'the devil' had yet put it 'in the heart of Judas to betray' Jesus.⁸ And let the person who is able observe that from the beginning of the Gospel up to the present, Matthew has never accused Judas, except to say in the list of the twelve apostles, 'And Judas son of Simon Iscariot, who also betrayed him.'⁹ We said many things about the fact that he treated Judas like the others where we discussed the words: 'Jesus sent these twelve, commanding them and saying' the things said there.¹⁰ Let us thus compare these words with those which are similar to what was said above because there, when the Lord prophesies what was to happen in these words, 'Peter took him and began to rebuke him saying: May it be propitious for you Lord; and this will not happen to you,'¹¹ but here the disciples are not related to have said or done anything when they heard of these future sad things for Christ. I think that they are silent now because earlier, when Peter took Jesus and rebuked him and said what he said, Jesus 'turned and said to Peter: Get behind me, Satan; you are a stumbling-block for me because you are not thinking about the things of God but of men.'¹² Therefore, it followed that the disciples were cautious, remembering what the Lord said to Peter, lest they hear such things or worse from their Master.

3 And it is not absurd to refresh our memory on those things which were said earlier resembling these: "Then he commanded his disciples that they tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and be killed, and on the third day to rise again."¹³ And after those words it is said that 'Peter takes him' and what follows.¹⁴ And further, it is said there that the Saviour is to be killed; here, however, the manner itself of the killing is written, that is, he is to be 'crucified'.

⁶ Mt 10:23; see 4:12.

⁷ Prov 27:1.

⁸ Jn 13:2.

⁹ Mt 10:4.

¹⁰ Mt 10:5. This passage was discussed in one of the books of the *Commentary* now lost.

¹¹ Mt 16:22.

¹² Mt 16:23.

¹³ Mt 16:20-1.

¹⁴ See Mt 16:22.

Why, then, did he say, 'It is necessary'?¹⁵ So long as Jesus was not handed over in Jerusalem 'to the chief priests and scribes' nor was condemned 'to death', or mocked, or beaten, or crucified, 'Jerusalem' continued to stand, and what was called the sanctuary was not demolished. But after they had ventured to do these things against Jesus, then those who handed him over were abandoned. The priests who condemned him to death, and the scribes who were blinded in their mind and deprived of understanding, and did not see the intention of the Holy Scriptures, were handed over to death, the enemy of Christ,¹⁶ and those who mocked Jesus were made a mockery when the army surrounded Jerusalem, when 'its desolation approached',¹⁷ and those who beat Jesus were beaten and continue to be beaten until 'the fullness of the Gentiles enters',¹⁸ since one 'who casts a stone on high casts it over his own head'.¹⁹ And all these things happened that the contemplation of God might withdraw from them and pass over to the Gentiles when the Gentiles are saved, of course, and 'the remnant' of the Jews 'according to election',²⁰ since 'If the Lord Sabaoth had not left' them 'seed', they would have 'become as Sodom', and would be 'like Gomorrah'.²¹ And I think that just as what was previously fulfilled as a copy and shadow of worship was dispelled on account of the heavenly worship, and when the true chief priest came the symbolical priest ceased, and when the true sacrifices for sin came in one sacrifice, the symbolic sacrifices were destroyed, so when the true Jerusalem received Jesus ascending on the beast of burden of his body (at which time daughter Zion rejoiced exceedingly and daughter Jerusalem which is above proclaimed it²²), then Jerusalem which was a shadow was destroyed, and the temple constructed of dead stones fell because of the temple which was to be erected from living stones, and the altar which was below was torn out because what was heavenly had appeared whose festival of dedication Jesus performed in true service.

But if, in accordance with a certain way of signifying things, people are the city, even now Jesus is handed over to those Jews who profess to be servants of God in Jerusalem (for thus I am designating those who have their hope in the place of that Jerusalem which once existed on earth). And those who have been appointed chief priests, as it were, and scribes, who are thought to know the divine literature, condemn Jesus to death by those things that they say slanderously about him, and there is no time when they do not hand Jesus over 'to the Gentiles' mocking him and his teaching among themselves. And with their tongues they are always scourging him and the worship of God which was introduced by Jesus. And they themselves indeed crucify him by the fact that they anathematize and wish to destroy his teaching. But he, made better

¹⁵ See Mt 16:21.¹⁶ See 1 Cor 15:25, 26.¹⁷ See Lk 21:20.¹⁸ Rom 11:25.¹⁹ Sir 27:25 (Vulg 27:28).²⁰ See Rom 11:5.²¹ Is 1:9.²² See Zach 9:9; Gal 4:26.

than all of them, being prostrate for a brief period, rises and appears alive to the Gentiles who have received the ability to see.

4 'Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons, worshipping and asking something from him. And he said to her: What do you want? she says to him: Say that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom. But Jesus answered and said to them: You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup which I shall drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I will be baptized? They say to him: We can. He says to them: You will indeed drink my cup and you will be baptized with the baptism, but it is not mine to give to you to sit at my right hand and at my left, but it is for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'²³

It is worthwhile in the present passage to look for a meaning that is not contemptible, but is truly worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Now I have set this out in advance because the text, for the simple and those who do not know how to seek the spiritual heights of God and of the Scriptures, indicates the simplicity of someone's request and Christ's simple response to it. But a more profound and spiritual understanding is indicated to those who can examine, even in limited measure, the themes of the Scriptures. The meaning, therefore, which is indicated by the former view is narrow and contemptible and contains nothing significant. For just as in a kingdom of the world those who sit with the king when he sits in royal attire and deals with something of the royal affairs appear to be honoured, so 'the mother of the sons of Zebedee' (I am speaking of the simple text) appears to request of the Saviour that one of her sons may sit 'at' his 'right hand', and the other 'at his left in' his 'kingdom'. And there would be nothing strange if a woman, because of feminine simplicity and lack of education, thought she ought to ask such things. But consider that the brothers themselves (as Mark explains it²⁴) also, although designated as men, and still imperfect with no lofty understanding of the reign of Christ have thought such things about those who will sit with Jesus. What will we say of Jesus who, although he shows it to be great for someone to sit 'at' his 'right or left', accepts the request and says: 'You do not know what you are asking', and: 'It is not mine to give to you, but to whom it has been prepared by my Father'? But the person who is a wise hearer of Scripture will ask, What does it mean to sit 'at the right' of Jesus and 'at the left in' his 'kingdom'. And it was fitting to gather what has been written about God or Christ sitting, so that from a discussion of those texts which are brought together in relation to this one and from a comparison of them with one another some great doctrine can become clear. But we put forth one text in order to avoid lengthy discussions. Here is what 'Micaiah says': 'I saw the God of Israel sitting on his seat, and the whole host of heaven was standing in a circle around him to his right and left.'²⁵

²³ Mt 20:20-3.

²⁴ See Mk 10:35.

²⁵ 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 22:19.

Everyone, therefore, who is spiritual and wishes to discuss all things with discernment will undoubtedly say that the sitting of God is spiritual on a spiritual seat, and likewise of Christ. For the word indicates nothing about a physical sitting of God or of Christ in all the sittings of this kind. For it is ridiculous, on account of these sittings designated in a physical manner, to think there are some seats constructed physically, I do not know from what material, on which God or his Christ might sit, or those who are to sit 'at' his 'right' or 'left', for whom this 'has been prepared' by the Father. And I do not know if it is [holy]²⁶ that it is said the host of heaven stands physically at God's 'right or left', or again to think that those who are saved and are praiseworthy are at the physical right hand of our king Jesus, and the evil and lost likewise at his physical left.²⁷

5 But see if perhaps we ought to understand that this is what it means for Christ to sit 'on the seat of his glory': when sin has been destroyed, which rules in the mortal bodies of humans,²⁸ and all rule of evil powers and authority has been destroyed, Christ is restored in his kingdom and receives his proper pre-eminence. And the fact that God does all things on the right and on the left means that there is now no evil before him. Let the person who is able, therefore, understand the excellence of the kingdom that Christ received among humans and the fact that he has been glorified with the glory which he had 'before the world existed',²⁹ before those who sinned had sinned and he had this glory with the Father. But let him also understand the excellence of those who approach in the first, second, or third place, constituted human beings in relation to their capacity, intending to sit at the right or at the left of Christ in his kingdom. God will restore them by cooperating with them and preparing them that they may approach the excellence of Christ. Those, indeed, who excel others approaching Christ are at Christ's 'right', who, of course, touch him and are joined to the right hand of the Word himself, and those who are inferior are on his 'left'. And see if you can understand the invisible creation to be called the right hand of Christ, and the visible, material one the left. Christ, indeed, rules over all; but some of those approaching him are assigned to the right and intelligible things, and others to the left and things of sense perception. And perhaps the true 'mother of the sons of Zebedee' (whom Christ called sons of thunder), herself being grandiloquent, judging great things about 'her sons' James and John (for they were truly great) and thinking them to be able to have first rank over all human nature, as those who would be able to comprehend her grandiloquence, she approaches the Lord and entreats him that he establish one 'on the right' and the other 'on the left'. The Saviour, however, rebukes such a grandiloquent mother of James and John as lacking knowledge about who the more excellent ones are, and because a gift of this kind belongs to God alone who is over all things, who is in accord with, cooperates

²⁶ Supplied from the Greek text. Klostermann posits a lacuna in the Latin text here.

²⁷ See Mt 25:33.

²⁸ See Rom 6:12.

²⁹ Jn 17:5.

with, and establishes in excellence of this kind those whom he shall see as worthy. Therefore, he said: 'You do not know what you ask', and: 'To sit at my right and left is not mine to give to you, but is for whom it has been prepared by my Father'. And I think that he wants to show the mother 'of the sons of Zebedee' and them that they still possess less perfection than people who are not mediocre are capable of possessing. Therefore he 'responds' after 'he had said: You do not know what you are asking; are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I will be baptized?' Finally, when they had said, 'We are able', Christ did not thus respond: You will be able to drink 'my cup indeed', but looking to their future perfection, he said: 'You will indeed drink my cup and you will be baptized with my baptism'.

6 But it is still necessary to ask on this passage what the 'cup' is and what the baptism is, for each is thus named as if they are different from one another. Many say that each relates to the suffering of martyrdom, not noticing that if the cup and baptism did not indicate two different perceptions each would by no means be named. Now we do not condemn that tradition, but we support another that the cup itself is understood to be the passion of afflictions. This is confirmed not only by that example which says: 'Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from me',³⁰ which is drunk with afflictions by him who takes up the struggle of martyrdom, until he drinks it by taking up everything that is introduced in the trial of martyrdom, but also by what is said in another passage: 'What shall I repay to the Lord for all that he has repaid to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call on the name of the Lord'. 'I will repay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all his people'. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints'.³¹ For we can repay nothing worthy of God for all the good things that he has done in us, unless we take up the cup of salvation readily, and call on the name of the Lord so that we can drink it courageously. In this drinking, we pay our vows 'to the Lord in the sight of all his people'. And he shows clearly in these words that the cup is martyrdom, because immediately, on account of the cup which is drunk, he adds the following words: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints'. All martyrdom has a twofold meaning. One is called the 'cup of salvation', and the other, baptism. And this which someone endures as afflictions is the 'cup' which all drink who take up everything inflicted on them neither rejecting anything or casting it off or spitting anything out. But it is a baptism because one receives remission of sins in the suffering. For if baptism promises the pardon of sins, as we have received from the baptism of water and Spirit, and the person who takes up the baptism of martyrdom receives the forgiveness of sins, without doubt martyrdom itself is reasonably designated a baptism.

And that forgiveness of sins happens for everyone who takes up martyrdom is clear because he says: 'Everyone who shall have confessed me before men,

³⁰ Mt 26:39.

³¹ Ps 115:3-4, 9, 6.

I also will confess that person before my Father who is in heaven,³² even if the person shall have some sins prior to the confession. For if those who have some sins have confessed, and Christ does not confess them before his Father, what he said will no longer be true: 'Everyone who shall have confessed me' and what follows. I do not know if Christ confesses a sinner before his Father at other times. The confession is of the Son rejoicing before the Father about the person whom he confesses being worthy of Christ's confession to the Father.

According to this the sons of Zebedee appear to have both drunk the cup and to have been baptized with the baptism, because Herod killed 'James, the brother of John with the sword',³³ and the emperor of the Romans (as tradition teaches) condemned John, who was giving testimony to the Word of God, to the island of Patmos, as he himself teaches about his martyrdom. He does not say who condemned him, but to what place he was condemned. And he speaks in this manner in his Revelation: 'I, John your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and in the patience of Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the Word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. And I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice as a trumpet' and the rest.³⁴ On this basis it is understood that he saw this revelation when he had been put on the island.

7 And we add, along with the things we have said: just as there is some food of Christ of which he says, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work',³⁵ so in relation to the thought of that food, there is also a drink. How audacious it is to deduce from that food and explain it with particular things, nevertheless, let the one who is able understand that perhaps the food is what occurs in action and what occurs in contemplation is the drink. For doing the will of his Father who sent him and completing his work is Christ's eating, and his drinking is to be wise in the will of him who sent him and to complete his knowledge. The following saying is also understood in relation to this distinction: 'My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink',³⁶ for the action of souls is the true food, and the knowledge of the truth is the true drink. Therefore, he also first gives 'to his disciples' 'the bread, blessing it' and breaking it, because action holds the first position, and after this, 'taking the cup and giving thanks, he said: Drink from this all of you',³⁷ because it is fitting first to fulfil what are actions and care for good work and thus, through the works to come also to the knowledge of things. And in the words of the prophet it is said as follows: 'Sow for yourselves to justice and reap the fruit of life'. Consequently, we should first do good works, and after this what it says: 'Enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge',³⁸ as if, after someone has changed his practices, he proceeds to knowledge along a certain path, and is enlightened. And it is said in the twenty-second Psalm, first: 'You have prepared

³² Mt 10:32.³³ Acts 12:2.³⁴ Rev 1:9-10.³⁵ Jn 4:34.³⁶ Jn 6:55.³⁷ Mt 26:26, 27.³⁸ Hos 10:12.

a table before me over against those who afflict me; you anointed my head with oil; and after this also: 'Your cup is intoxicating as if very clear.'³⁹ And let the person who reads these words not censure us, because it was necessary that they be interpreted in some measure related to what was said about the sittings of God or of Christ. We will respond that it was necessary only to assuage what was put forward from the Scriptures about the sittings and to avert the reader from that lowly tradition. But doing a primary exposition of the sitting of God or of Christ and of their standing and walking is a task for another time, since the present exposition does not require it.

8 'And when the ten heard, they became sullen about the two brothers'⁴⁰ because they had asked that they be placed at the head of the others. Notice that Judas was among those indignant. And if he was among the others who were indignant perhaps the devil had not yet put it 'in' his 'heart' 'to betray' the Lord, but he shared the same intention with the other apostles.

'And Jesus called them together and said: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are greater exercise authority among them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be greater among you shall be your servant, and whoever shall wish to be first among you shall be your servant.'⁴¹

Because the two brothers wanted to seize glory for themselves over the other apostles, and the others were indignant, Jesus takes this as an opportunity to lay out the rule of justice for the faithful about how someone is able to obtain supremacy with God. 'The rulers of the Gentiles', not content only to rule their subjects, endeavoured to lord it over them violently. But 'among you' who are my friends these things shall not be, lest perhaps those who appear to have some pre-eminence in the church lord it over their own brothers or exercise authority among them. Because just as all things physical are appointed on the basis of necessity not of will, and spiritual things from will, not of necessity, so also those who are spiritual princes ought to have their pre-eminence based on their love for their subjects and not on physical fear. But also, let those who wish to be 'greater' with my Father in comparison with their other brothers become the servant of those whom they wish to be greater than. One who desires pre-eminence in the church ought to become the servant of all with a servant's humility so that he may yield to all in the things that pertain to salvation.

The divine Word also teaches us these things. But we either do not understand the will of God lying in the Scriptures, or we despise such a recommendation of Christ and are such that we appear to exceed even the pride of the evil princes of the world. Not only do we seek, like kings, a fearful battle-line preceding us, and show ourselves difficult of access, especially to the poor, and behave in ways to those who obstruct us or beg for mercy in relation to something, as not even the tyrants and crueller among the princes of the world do

³⁹ Ps 22:5.⁴⁰ Mt 20:24.⁴¹ Mt 20:25-7.

to their subjects. And it is possible to see in some churches, especially of the larger cities, princes of the Christian people neither having nor permitting any approachability to themselves. The apostle also gives masters a command about their servants saying, 'Masters, pay your servants what is just and fair, knowing that you too have a master in heaven,'⁴² and he teaches also to forego threats. But some bishops threaten cruelly, sometimes on the occasion of sin, but sometimes despising the care⁴³ of the poor, when it is written: 'The greater you are the more you should humble yourself, and you will find grace before the Lord', and likewise in Proverbs: 'Before distress a man's heart is exalted, and before glory it is humbled.'⁴⁴ Let 'the princes of the Gentiles', therefore, lord it over 'them', but let the 'princes' of churches serve those placed under them. But also let the 'great ones among the Gentiles' exercise authority, but those of the faithful should listen to him who says: 'Learn from me, because I am meek and humble in heart.'⁴⁵ We are not saying these things to abase ecclesiastical sovereignty; for there is a time when (according to the voice of the apostle) 'they should censure a sinner before all so that the others might be fearful', and there is a time when, using his authority, he delivers a sinner 'to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'⁴⁶ Nevertheless, this should happen rarely; for those who cause disturbance are to be rebuked, and the 'feeble-minded' are to be consoled, the weak are to be supported, and magnanimity is to be had 'towards all', no one is to be repaid 'evil for evil', that the person who sins may not be considered an enemy, but may be corrected as a brother.⁴⁷ We have said these things wishing to show that the princes of churches ought not be imitators of princes of this world, but ought to imitate Christ who is accessible, speaking to women, laying hands on children, and washing and drying his disciples' feet, giving an example to them that they too should act in similar ways to their brothers.⁴⁸ And perhaps also because, although he had been appointed Lord, he was serving for the salvation of people in our race, for which reason he is said to have taken 'the form of a servant' and to have humbled himself, 'having become obedient even to death, for which reason also God exalted him.'⁴⁹ The person, therefore, who wants to be exalted should do similar things, that he might be exalted through them.

'Just as also the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve'; for even if angels served him when 'they approached and served him',⁵⁰ even if Martha served him,⁵¹ nevertheless he did not come 'that he might be served', but that he might serve; and he rose to such distinction serving that 'he gave his soul as a ransom for many' who believe in him. To whom did he give 'his soul a ransom for many'? It is not fitting to say to God, is it? Perhaps then to the evil one, for he was ruling in us until the soul of Jesus was given to him as a 'ransom' for us.

⁴² Col 4:1. ⁴³ I have assumed that *cuam* is a typographical error and should be *curam*.

⁴⁴ Sir 3:18; Prov 18:12. ⁴⁵ Mt 11:29. ⁴⁶ 1 Tim 5:20; 1 Cor 5:5.

⁴⁷ See 1 Thess 5:14, 15; 2 Thess 3:15. ⁴⁸ See Jn 13:5, 13-15.

⁴⁹ See Phil 2:7, 8, 9. ⁵⁰ Mt 4:11. ⁵¹ Jn 12:2.

He was deceived, of course, and supposed that he could have power over him, and did not see that he could not maintain tortures in holding him. For this reason, also 'death', thinking it had power over him, did not have power because he alone was 'free' among all 'the dead' and stronger than every power of death, and so much stronger that he set free from death all who wished to follow him who were held by death, death having no power at all in them afterwards, for no one who follows Jesus can be seized by death. And when his soul had been given as a 'ransom for many' it did not remain with him to whom it had been given. For this reason, the prophet says, 'You will not leave my soul in the underworld.'⁵²

9 'And when they departed from Jericho a large crowd followed him.'⁵³

The historical aspects of this passage are in the open. But let us talk about what strikes us as spiritual. And first let us consider what the statement means: When the disciples of Jesus 'departed from Jericho' with Jesus himself, 'a large crowd followed him'. Observe, then, if, remembering what we said on the parable in Luke about the man descending 'from Jerusalem to Jericho' and falling 'among thieves', you can say that perhaps here too 'Jericho' is understood as this terrestrial world?⁵⁴ The one, therefore, who descended 'from Jerusalem to Jericho' was Adam (that is, humanity), who fell 'among thieves'. For his sake, Jesus descended to Jericho with his disciples and departed, having purchased many believers in the city who wish to follow him, for those who are in 'Jericho' do not know how to withdraw from the wisdom of the world unless they see not only Jesus departing 'from Jericho', but also his disciples. When they see this, therefore, 'large crowds followed him'. And it is possible to see those who want to live according to the Word and desire to despise the world and all worldly things following Christ and his disciples so that proceeding after him and using him as their leader they may ascend into that heavenly Jerusalem.⁵⁵

10 'And behold two blind men were sitting beside the road and when they heard that Jesus was passing by they cried out saying: Be merciful to us Lord, Son of David.'⁵⁶

We can say that the two blind men are Judah and Israel who were blind prior to the coming of Christ, nevertheless, they were lingering 'sitting beside the road' of the Law and the prophets. And they were blind because prior to the coming of Christ to their soul they did not see the true Word that was in the Law and the prophets. And they were crying out, 'Be merciful to us, Lord, Son of David' because they perceived that they were blind, and did not understand the intention of the Scriptures and they wanted to see again and see the glory that was in them. As still blind and thinking nothing great about Jesus but understanding him only according to the flesh, they were crying out to him who was made 'of the seed of David according to the flesh',⁵⁷ because they

⁵² Ps 15:10.

⁵³ Mt 20:29.

⁵⁴ See Lk 10:30; Origen, *HomLk* 34.

⁵⁵ See Heb 12:22.

⁵⁶ Mt 20:30.

⁵⁷ See Rom 1:3.

understood nothing more than that he was the Son 'of David', and all their eloquence which appeared to be from God knew nothing more about Christ than that he was 'of David'. And we said that the 'two' blind men are two peoples, divided into two kingdoms in the time of Rehoboam. And notice how the prophets prophesied now to Israel, now to Judah, and sometimes to both at the same time. These peoples, therefore, as soon as, 'they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out' as a kind of prophetic sign. For I think that 'they had heard' from those who had prophesied the coming of Christ and that 'he would pass by' (coming indeed into the city, but departing from it), and being afraid lest perhaps he pass them by, without showing them any mercy at all, 'they were crying out: Be merciful to us, Lord, Son of David'. Jesus 'did not pass by', however, but stops, so that while he is stopped his favour does not flow away, but as from a stationary fountain his mercy flows down and reaches them. 'But the crowd', that is those who have believed, going before them, also 'rebuked those' crying out, 'Son of David, be mercifully to us, that they be silent' and not call him by a contemptible name, but rather say: 'Son' of God, 'Be merciful to us'.

11 'Jesus stops', therefore, retained by their cries and prayers, and calls them to himself, showing the beginning of his benefit to them when 'he called them', for he did not 'call them' in vain. Would that when we call out and say, 'Be merciful to us, Lord', he will call us when we begin from the Son of David, and 'stopping' he will call us as he gives attention to our pleas. And 'he said' to them: 'What do you want me to do for you?' I think he means something like this: Show 'what you want', make it clear so that all who are departing 'from Jericho' and following me may hear and see the deed. And they responded: 'That our eyes may be opened'. They were noble, indeed, (because they were from Israel and Judah) but blind (with ignorance and perceiving their own blindness), and 'hearing' those who preached about Jesus, they say that they want their 'eyes to be opened'. And those say this especially who, when they read the divine Scriptures, perceive their blindness of the meaning of the Scriptures. For these say: 'Be merciful to us', and: 'We want our eyes 'to be opened'. And would that we too, perceiving in what things we are blind and do not see, 'sitting beside' the same 'road' of the Scriptures and 'hearing that Jesus is passing by', might cause him to stop by our prayers, saying: 'We want our eyes to be opened'. But if we shall speak from a disposition desiring to see what he gives, constituted as Word, Power, Wisdom, and all the things that are said of him, he will touch the eyes of our souls and open them. So, when he touches, he withdraws the darkness of ignorance from our understandings so that 'immediately' not only may we see, but we may also follow 'him' who gives us the ability to see for no other reason than that we may always follow him and, by his guidance, we may pass over to God and see God with our eyes which he has opened.

12 But since Mark and Luke tell the same story, as some think but, according to others, a similar one, it is worthwhile also to see what they say. First, let us look at Mark who writes as follows: 'And he came into Jericho. And going out from there, with his disciples and a large crowd.'⁵⁸ Those who understand this in a bodily sense will say, because of the different wordings, at one time Christ healed those 'two' blind men, and at another time that one whom Mark mentions, and at a third time that which Luke writes.

Those, however, who understand the text spiritually maintain that the evangelists have set forth one and the same thing in diverse ways. For there are 'two blind men', as we said, Judah and Israel, but there is one collective people blended from both. There is a 'large crowd', therefore, of Gentiles going out of the world with Jesus and his disciples. And there is a Jewish remnant sitting 'beside the road', that is, beside the prophetic Scriptures, and begging for the understanding necessary for their souls, and as Mark puts it, they were crying out loudly, calling on the Son of David. And when you see those from the Jews who have believed in Jesus, sometimes thinking him to be the son of Mary and Joseph, and other times the son of Mary alone and the Holy Spirit, you will see how that blind man whom the multitude reproaches calls out: 'Son of David, be merciful to me.' For the many from the Gentiles who have departed from Jericho obviously reproach the people from the Jews who seem to believe, that those be silent who are poor in the faith of Christ and think him to be from the seed of a man and woman, deriving his descent from David.⁵⁹ But although many reproach him, he cries out 'much more', believing indeed in Jesus, but believing in him as a man, and crying out he says, 'Son of David, Be merciful to me.' And Jesus, stopping, does not now himself call him (as in Matthew), but orders him to be called. Next, it says: 'And he throws off his garment, leaps up, and comes to Jesus.'⁶⁰ Perhaps the garment of the blind man and the veil of the beggar are understood of the blindness and poverty with which he had been surrounded in that he throws them off and comes to Jesus and confesses, saying in a dignified voice, 'Rabboni', for it is more dignified to say 'Rabboni' or, as he says in the others, 'Lord,' than to say, 'Son of David.'⁶¹ Whence also the Lord did not offer healing because of his request, 'Son of David, have mercy on me,' nor when he was sitting clothed in the garment of blindness and poverty, or when he was sitting beside the road begging, but on account of his statement, 'Rabboni, that I might see,' he said to him: 'Go, your faith has saved you.'⁶²

13 Now let us look at Luke's account, passing over what he said in common with the others, and touching on the things peculiar to it. Notice first that Mark and Matthew present Jesus departing 'from Jericho', but Luke says the following: 'And it came to pass when he approached Jericho.'⁶³ Therefore, according to Luke, when he enters Jericho and is in the vicinity, he illuminates

⁵⁸ Mk 10:46.

⁶⁰ Mk 10:50.

⁵⁹ A reference to the Ebionites, as the Greek text states explicitly.

⁶¹ See Mk 10:51; Mt 20:33; Lk 18:41.

⁶² Mk 10:52.

⁶³ Lk 18:35.

the blind man. Someone will say in relation to the spiritual mystery, that what Luke says is first, what Mark says is second, and what Matthew said is third. First, he had to approach Jericho, then to enter it, and afterwards to go out from it. Luke, therefore, writes: 'And it came to pass when he approached Jericho; and Mark next, 'and he enters Jericho and departing from there', but Matthew writes neither that he had approached Jericho nor that he enters Jericho, but only, 'when they were departing from Jericho'.⁶⁴ It is possible, therefore, according to Luke that he did this when he approaches Jericho, and according to Mark when he enters Jericho, and according to Matthew when he departs from Jericho.

Next consider that when the blind man cries out and says: 'Be merciful to me, Son of David', 'those who were going before reproached him that he be silent'. It is as if one should say: Those who first believed were reproaching the man crying out, 'Son of David', that he be silent and not call him by a contemptible name, but rather should say: 'Son of God, Be merciful to me.' But he cried out even more, 'Son of David, Be merciful to me.' And Jesus stopped and ordered him to be brought to him.⁶⁵ And see if that blind man is not inferior (as we said), for 'Jesus' did not 'call' him nor did he ask that he be called but, as if he were incapable of this, 'he ordered him to be brought to him' as if he were not able to come on his own. And when he had approached him he asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?'⁶⁶ And he did not ask him previously, nor after he had been asked did he approach him, but because he approached, therefore, when he was asked he said: 'That I might see, Lord'. Furthermore, Luke has this fact in addition, that in those other accounts the blind man only followed,⁶⁷ but here 'he followed giving glory to God', so that all seeing him might offer praise to God.⁶⁸

14 'And when they had approached Jerusalem, he came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives'.⁶⁹

It is worthwhile to show here the intention of the evangelists who are writing and their theme because after they reflect on his marvellous and glorious works they also make mention of the provision of the she-ass and of the Lord sitting on her. Grant that the evangelists wrote about the ability of the blind to see, the healing of paralytics, the resurrection of the dead, the cleansing of lepers in order to strengthen faith in Christ in those people who read about his works in their writings; but why did they wish to write that when Jesus approached Jerusalem with his disciples and came 'into Bethphage' next to the Mount of 'Olives he sent two disciples', and commanded them concerning a she-ass and her colt, that 'untying' her they should lead her to him.⁷⁰ He frequently did not hesitate to walk a greater distance on foot, as he did when he passed from Jerusalem through Jericho and went into Galilee, when he came

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Mk 10:46; Mt 20:29.

⁶⁵ Lk 18:40.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ See Mt 20:34; Mk 10:52.

⁶⁸ Lk 18:43.

⁶⁹ Mt 21:1.

⁷⁰ See Mt 21:2.

to the well and, weary 'from the journey', sat on it.⁷¹ And why is it that Jesus himself orders that they untie 'a bound she-ass' with her colt, and commands that they respond to the one who says to them, 'Why are you untying her?': 'Because the Lord desires her work, and he will send her back immediately.'⁷² For not being the kind of Lord who has need of a she-ass and her colt when they are tied indicates at first sight something worthy of his magnificence.

But what is it, that even Zachariah the prophet spoke of it in advance in words like this: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion; Proclaim it, O daughter Jerusalem: Behold your king comes to you, just and saving, meek and sitting on a beast of burden and her newborn colt?'⁷³ And if you wish to learn from the prophet how daughter Zion had this great joy, listen to what he says: 'And he will destroy chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be destroyed, and there will be abundance and peace from the nations; and he will rule the waters as far as the sea and the source of the rivers of the earth. And you, in the blood of the covenant, have dismissed your prisoners from the pit which does not have water.'⁷⁴

We have observed that, just as in other places, Matthew and John have quoted the same prophecy but not in the same words. For 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion; Proclaim it, O daughter Jerusalem' is not the same as: 'Tell it, daughters of Zion', or: 'Fear not, O daughter Zion' and others which are not cited in the same way.⁷⁵

15 And it is necessary to ask how the prophet reasonably commands daughter Zion to rejoice greatly and daughter Jerusalem to tell it because of him who sits 'on a she-ass and a new colt', when a little later Jesus saw Jerusalem and 'wept over it', saying, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets' and what follows. See, therefore, if perhaps the Zion which is to rejoice and the Jerusalem which is to tell it does not mean that city that crucified the Lord, but that one which received the crucified one, heavenly Zion, of which the apostle says to the Hebrews: 'But you have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem', and what follows. Likewise, to the Galatians: 'But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother.'⁷⁶ Perhaps, then, all these things are mysteries of the Saviour who, by his disciples, has released the bonds of the Jewish people and the people who have come from the Gentiles. For the she-ass, which at that time was the synagogue, was bound with sins, and the colt with it, which afterwards became the newborn believing people from the Gentiles. And drawing both these peoples near to the heavenly 'Jerusalem', that is as he ascends into heaven, he ordered his disciples to loose them, giving them the Holy Spirit and saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Those whose sins you dismiss, are dismissed for them; and those whose you retain, shall be retained.'⁷⁷ And the disciples of Christ are always loosing the 'bound she-ass'

⁷¹ See Jn 4:6.⁷² Mt 21:3.⁷³ Zech 9:9.⁷⁴ Zech 9:10-11.⁷⁵ Zech 9:9; Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15.⁷⁶ Heb 12:22; Gal 4:26.⁷⁷ Jn 20:22-3.

and 'the colt' and leading them to Jesus who wants to use those released from the bond of their prior sins as a vehicle. And it is worthy of the Son of God that he thus treats the bound she-ass and the colt bound 'with her' as necessary (for he is merciful). And he treats them as necessary, so that sitting on them, he may refresh those on whom he sits more than he is refreshed by them.

16 But someone will ask how the statement that follows agrees with what we have said: 'He will send them back immediately'. This, in my opinion, is the answer to that question. Because their lord who had bound them was no other than that one of whom the apostle said: 'But to us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things.' It is clear that no one of those who will say 'Why are you loosing the colt?' will contradict him, for Christ thus says, 'And if anyone shall ask you, you shall say, Because the Lord desires their work,' as if no one could contradict. And notice that, after Jesus ascended to Jerusalem sitting on this colt or that, there was to be some mission related to some necessary work at that place, so that the she-ass and her colt do some kind of work. This is indicated implicitly, not, however, clearly. I reached this understanding by trusting in the order of the beatitudes which Matthew composes. For after he said: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven' he wrote this: 'Blessed are the meek, because they will possess the land.'⁷⁸ We say that in these beatitudes 'the kingdom of heaven' is the first of the blessed, and in second place is 'they shall possess the land', not that they are on it through every age, but they have been comforted because they hungered and thirsted for justice, and having been filled with it and having pursued mercy they are again restored to the kingdom of heaven. Or certainly, because many of the Jewish people or Gentiles, whom we interpreted above as the she-ass and colt, who have believed in Christ and have received him over themselves, afterwards have been sent back by Christ to the Jewish people or to other nations not yet believing, that they might preach the Lord Jesus as the Son of God to them. And this is what he means when he says, 'And he will immediately send them back'.

If, therefore, the she-ass and her colt are those whom we mentioned above whom the Word mounted, don't consider the statement absurd because men of faith are compared to animals, for perhaps the prophet, understanding some such thing also said that he himself had become as a beast of burden, not simply a beast of burden, but as a beast of burden with God or with his Christ, in relation to which he said: 'I became a beast of burden with you.'⁷⁹ For so far as God is concerned, not only are we beasts of burden, but also so far as those much more intelligent than us, and in the same way, in so far as Christ the shepherd is concerned, we are also his sheep, because the distance between him and us is as great as that between human beings and a beast of burden of whatever kind.

⁷⁸ Mt 5:3, 4.

⁷⁹ Ps 72:22.

And perhaps when they ascend into Jerusalem (with Jesus seated on them) they are a she-ass and a colt, but having been in that place, they will not remain there but they will be sent back now changed, benefitted, nourished on the divinity of the Word, and dignified with the distinction of knowledge so that they may be held worthy to be sent back to the glory of God into that place whence they were previously received after the Lord has improved them and, as it were, presented them with this reward because they had carried him and had rested in him, so that, as we said, they might be held worthy of being sent back to the place of this earth from which they had been received, but no longer to their former works. For it is not proper that our Lord, who is disposed to be merciful, should send them again to bondage and evil works, once they received the Son of God in their hearts and he has received and honoured them and released them from bondage and made them his own seat. It was suitable in all these things for Zion, the daughter of God, to rejoice greatly and to extend the joy (the fruit 'of the Holy Spirit'⁸⁰), and for his daughter Jerusalem to proclaim it. For 'the just and saving king' was coming to her, and he was not simply 'saving,' but 'just and saving,' that is, saving with judgement and justice.⁸¹ He was coming 'sitting on a she-ass and a newborn colt,' which we have discussed, visiting Israel and destroying 'the chariots of Ephraim,'⁸² arrayed like the chariots of Pharaoh which 'he cast into the sea.'⁸³ But he was coming to destroy also the 'horse,' Jerusalem's animal of war, that Israel would make peace, converting his lost sheep. Why would it not be an occasion worthy of great joy for a just, saving, and gentle king thus to come into Jerusalem, from which every 'war bow' was to be destroyed so that no longer would 'sinners' in it stretch out 'the bow' or prepare 'arrows in their quiver to shoot the upright in heart in the dark.'⁸⁴ And at that time there was to be peace from the faith of the Gentiles being saved, when the Lord rules 'the waters as far as the sea,' that is of the peoples, and rules also 'the rivers rushing out of the earth' and making exits and irrigating many of its places.⁸⁵

The person, however, who wishes to understand Zion simply as the Jewish people to whom the Saviour comes, can say the following: the Word of God did indeed command daughter Zion to rejoice and daughter Jerusalem to proclaim it, and if some of them disbelieved and did works unworthy of joy and did not receive the precept of the one proclaiming it, they themselves became the reason that they suffered the things that they suffered, so that it is rightly said to them, 'To you, indeed, the Word of God was sent first, but because you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles.'⁸⁶

17 And let us also consider the name 'Bethphage' according to Matthew, but Bethany according to Mark, and Bethphage and Bethany according to Luke.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Gal 5:22.

⁸¹ See Zech 9:9.

⁸² See Zech 9:10.

⁸³ Ex 15:4.

⁸⁴ Ps 10:2.

⁸⁵ See Zech 9:10.

⁸⁶ Acts 13:46.

⁸⁷ See Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29. See Origen, *ComJn* 10.123-7; *HomLk* 37.1.

This was a place 'on the mountain which is called Olives'. Now Bethphage is interpreted to mean 'House of Jawbones' (It was a village of priests, because the jawbone was a particular portion of the priests in the law⁸⁸), and Bethany means 'House of Obedience'. All, therefore, who are released from the bondage of their sins are brought into the house of obedience, or to the priestly house of jawbones or of patience. We can say in relation to this house, taking a lead especially from the book of the Judges, that there was a fountain called the fountain of the jawbone from which Samson drank when he was thirsty; or perhaps that mysterious fountain was the fountain of the patience of the faithful to whom the Lord said: 'Offer also the other jaw to that person who strikes you on one jaw.'⁸⁹ Consequently, the Lord may go up from there on those whom his disciples, in keeping with his precept, have released and led to him. And 'the Mount of Olives' is the church in which the fruit-bearing faithful can say: 'And I am as a fruit-bearing olive tree in the house of God.'⁹⁰ And those who are led to him, possessing the initial things of the faith in their beginnings, are 'like olive-shoots around the table' of Christ, because they are his sons.⁹¹ And if we must explain the mystery of the two disciples whom the Lord 'sent', perhaps we can say, not unreasonably, that they were Peter and Paul in a mystery, who gave themselves the right hand 'of fellowship', that Peter should go to the people bearing the yoke in circumcision, to preach to the Jewish people passing their days under the yoke of the law, and Paul to the nations, to the newborn and untamed colt. For both (that is the Jewish people and the people of the nations) were in the village and not in the city of Zion or Jerusalem. But 'the disciples' of Christ release both and lead them to Christ so that Christ may ride on them when they shall have been released from sins, receiving their forgiveness. Jesus does not sit on those still bound and shackled 'by the chains of their sins.'⁹² And in Mark and Luke the colt also is introduced as bound, 'on which no man has sat',⁹³ for nothing rational or in accord with human moral conduct normally happens in the nations; sometimes not even a trace of discipline is established among them, but contrary to what they deserve, they have been pursued by God so that the Word of God might sit on them and, with him leading, they might go up into the Jerusalem of God.

18 'And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them and brought the she-ass and colt, and they placed their garments on them, and he sat on it.'⁹⁴

Therefore, when they brought the 'she-ass and colt' to Christ they did not leave them bare, but put clothing on them with which they themselves had been adorned, and cast dignity on those which they had released by their own exertion, with the garments that had covered themselves. This was so Christ might ascend on those adorned with the garments of the disciples of Christ, and the Word of God might rest on them and be established with them,

⁸⁸ See Dt 18:3.

⁹² See Prov 5:22.

⁸⁹ See Jdg 15:19; Lk 6:29.

⁹³ Mk 11:2; Lk 19:30.

⁹⁰ Ps 51:10.

⁹⁴ Mt 21:6-7.

⁹¹ Ps 127:3.

because it was fitting that each of the disciples confer something on Christ the gentle king, that they could say, We are partakers of the work of Christ.⁹⁵

'And a great crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from trees and spread them on the road.'⁹⁶ Many people, therefore, went up to Jerusalem with Christ. These also demonstrated the fruit of their reception of Christ by spreading 'their garments' and whatever attire they had 'on the road' over which the 'she-ass and the colt' were passing, so that they might advance cleanly and by no means touch the earth and the dust of earthly things, or experience them on the road by which they were going up to Jerusalem. A third company is introduced after 'the two disciples' and the large crowd spreading 'their garments on the road'. They were doing something beautiful on the way by which Jesus was proceeding into Jerusalem.

'And the crowd which was preceding and which was following was crying out saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.'⁹⁷ And you will say that those preceding Jesus were the holy prophets and other just people before his advent; and following were those who were apostles after his advent and other faithful people who have followed the Word of God. Nevertheless, those who preceded were not saying one thing and those who followed another, but they all were crying out together with a harmonious voice praising the human dispensation of Christ in their words: 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; and his reinstatement in the holy places in their words: 'Hosanna in the highest'.

19 'And when Jesus had entered Jerusalem the whole city was moved saying: Who is this? And the crowd said, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.'⁹⁸

While those two groups, that is those preceding and following, were crying out with sayings in agreement, Jesus himself entered 'into' the true 'Jerusalem'. And the heavenly powers, which are called 'the whole city', were saying in admiration, 'Who is this?' in accord with what had been prophesied in the Psalm about his ascension and about the admiration of the heavenly powers who admire him because of the new vehicle of his body. For the Psalm reads as follows: 'Lift up your gates, O princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, and the king of glory will enter. Who is this king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.'⁹⁹ And in Isaiah there are similar things prophesied about his return to heaven after the dispensation of his passion in this manner: 'Who is this who comes from Edom, having red garments from Bosor, this one handsome in his gown?'¹⁰⁰ Now we have said this that we may show the mystery in the words: 'When he ascended into Jerusalem the whole city was moved saying, Who is this?'

⁹⁵ See Heb 3:14.

⁹⁸ Mt 21:10-11.

⁹⁶ Mt 21:8.

⁹⁹ Ps 23:7-8.

⁹⁷ Mt 21:9.

¹⁰⁰ Is 63:1.

20 'And Jesus entered the temple of God and cast out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those selling doves, and he said to them: It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves'.¹⁰¹

It was beyond the measure of the dignity of Christ, in so far as he appeared to be the son of a carpenter, that he utilized such great confidence and authority, when he cast the market out of the temple. Not even the prince of some nation making use of his authority could easily perform what Jesus did. We have made these remarks in relation to the simple understanding. But we shall say the following in relation to the moral understanding, beginning with the temple of God, of which God said through the prophet: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'.¹⁰² Therefore, in conformity with the physical circumcision of the flesh and the material festivities and sacrifices of the law, it was consequently thought that 'the temple of God' was constructed from lifeless stones, first by Solomon, then restored by Ezra, but subsequently, after the advent of Christ, destroyed by the Romans. That was thought to be 'the house of prayer', which having been destroyed, necessitated that the Jews, no longer having a house 'of prayer' virtually no longer have the privilege of the contemplation of God, nor can they serve God according to the law. When this happened, therefore, Christ cast out everything in the mystery of their spiritual actualities and then did visibly what he always does invisibly, 'casting out' of the temple 'those selling and buying' and overturning both 'the tables of the money-changers' and 'the seats of those selling doves' to reprove the people, that they not have time for worldly festivities celebrated in the name of God by buying and selling in an inappropriate place, in which they ought not sell and buy but, as those who are gathered in the house 'of prayer', devote themselves to prayers alone.

21 But I think that now the church of Christ is the 'temple of God' constructed from living stones. There are many in it, however, not living spiritually as they should, but waging war 'according to the flesh,' they are making 'the house of prayer' constructed from living stones 'a den of thieves' by actions which are not worthy of the church of God, but of a den 'of thieves'.¹⁰³ For will one, who looks closely at the sins of such Christians in many churches who consider 'profit to be piety', and when they ought 'to live from the Gospel' according to which it is fitting for servants of God to live, do not do this but acquire riches and multiple possessions, not say that they have made the church 'a den of thieves', so that Christ would rightly say to them because of their dismantling of his church: 'What advantage is there in my blood when I descend into corruption?'¹⁰⁴ Likewise, he speaks as follows through Hosea: 'Woe is me because

¹⁰¹ Mt 21:12-13.

¹⁰² Mt 21:13; see Is 56:7.

¹⁰³ See 1 Pt 2:5; 2 Cor 10:3.

¹⁰⁴ Ps 29:10.

I have become like one who gathers stubble at harvest, and a cluster of grapes in vintage, when there is no cluster to eat the first fruits. Woe, my soul, because the devout person has perished from the earth, and there is no human being who sets things right.¹⁰⁵ And when you have understood Jesus saying such things and lamenting our sins, consider at the same time also that which is written in the Gospel: 'When he had seen Jerusalem, he wept over it and said.'¹⁰⁶ And if he wept reasonably over Jerusalem, he will more reasonably weep over the church built to be 'a house of prayer' but made 'a den of thieves' because of the repulsive wealth and luxury of certain people (and O that these were not the leaders of the people!).

But at that time 'Jesus entered the temple of God' and cleansed it, casting out 'all who were selling and buying in the temple, and' overturning 'the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those selling doves'. But now, since they are not visited, those who assemble in the name of Jesus Christ are together¹⁰⁷ in assemblies selling and buying 'in the temple' and doing all the other things, and Christ never appears to them so that he may cast them out and save the rest. But if he should visit at the time of our sins and come as loving us, so that he might reprove and chastise us as sons to bring us back, then the power of Christ will enter our gatherings when we are gathered with the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸ And he will enter and cast out 'all who are selling and buying in the temple', selling, indeed, and getting rid of whatever good they had, and 'buying' evils for themselves. And he will destroy 'the tables of the money-changers', that is, of the greedy and lovers of money, who, in iniquity, change the money of others for themselves and do not pay it out for what is advantageous. There are also others 'in the temple' selling and buying the 'doves' of Christ, and handing the simple over like doves, who pray and say, 'Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly away and rest?,'¹⁰⁹ handing them over to leaders to whom they ought not.

22 And I think the word about the sellers of doves is appropriate for those who hand churches over to greedy, tyrannical, undisciplined, irreligious bishops or presbyters or deacons. This is also why the evangelists specified only the 'seats' to have been overturned by Jesus. And would that those who boast about the seat of Moses on which they sit and sell all the churches of doves and hand them over to such overseers would hear the following words of Scripture with their appropriate warning. The Lord says rightly through Jeremiah the prophet: 'The leaders of my people do not know me; they are stupid sons and lack intelligence; they are wise to do evil but do not know how to do good'. There are similar words in Micah: 'The leaders of my people will be cast out of their luxurious house.'¹¹⁰ And if they should hear, they would never sell the 'doves' of

¹⁰⁵ The quotation is from Mic 7:1-2.

¹⁰⁸ See 1 Cor 5:4.

¹⁰⁹ Ps 54:7.

¹⁰⁶ See Lk 19:41.

¹⁰⁷ See 1 Cor 7:5; 11:20.

¹¹⁰ Jer 4:22; Mic 2:9.

Christ, but they would appoint them leaders who have mercy on the doves and look out for their salvation and neither despise nor kill the plump doves.

But if it is necessary to explain more carefully those three wares driven away from the temple, we can say that all among Christian people who have time for nothing other in this age than buying and selling, and seldom persist in prayers or other righteous activities which the divine word demands, are themselves selling and buying 'in the temple of God', making the house 'of prayer a den of thieves'. And the deacons who do not handle the tables of the money of the churches honestly but are always stealing from them, and do not dispense justly the funds they dispense, so that they become rich from the things of the poor, are the changers of money who have the 'tables' that Christ 'overturns'. But since the deacons have charge of the tables of the money of the churches, let the apostles teach us in their Acts when there was (it says) 'a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily ministration'. They say, 'It is not good, leaving the Word of God to minister to tables. Choose, therefore, from yourselves seven whom we may appoint for this purpose; and we will be fervent in the Word of God.'¹¹¹ And it is the bishops and presbyters to whom the chief seats are entrusted who hand over churches to those whom they ought not, and appoint as leaders those whom it is not advantageous to appoint. They are the ones who sell the 'doves', whose 'seats' Christ 'overturns'. Let each one, therefore who sits on an ecclesiastical seat and who loves 'the first seats in the synagogues' beware lest they sit in such a way that when the Lord comes he overturns them as deserving upset. And let each of the deacons who are gathering riches for themselves by embezzling the money of the poor be cognizant of the present Scripture so that they stop gathering for themselves, lest when the Lord comes he overturns their tables of distribution. But also, let those who are always being carried about by the cares of the world to buying and selling, be careful lest perhaps when the Lord comes he cast them out of the temple 'of God', since when one has been cast out he has no hope of returning to the place from which he was cast out. And it is clear to me when I examine the Scriptures carefully that Jesus does not do these things by chance at the second advent and in the future divine judgement. For at that time when he has entered all the churches he will cast out or overturn those whom he finds unworthy of the temple of God (in accordance with those things that we said). And if anyone shall be found not having any of these three offences, and shall be found to be in the temple of God, let him be confident, for he will not be cast out by Christ nor will anything of his be overturned, nor will he be reproached as one who has made the house 'of prayer a den of thieves'. But I think even in this time Jesus comes invisibly to individual churches of God and casts out those whom we said above were worthy of ejection. For as often as he brings forth trial on the

¹¹¹ See Acts 6:1-4.

church he comes to it and visits it so that he might do what it is written that he does in this passage.

23 Next, let us see if perhaps this passage can be understood as follows. Every rational nature is a temple 'of God' which has been created to contain the glory of God. When we sin, therefore, we fill our soul, which is the temple of God by nature, with certain evil thoughts that sell and with certain ones that buy and, if anything holy is left in our soul it is a dove. Jesus says, therefore, to those who sin and are filled with thoughts that are thieves: It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.' And Jesus indeed casts out of the temple those thieves who have made the 'house of prayer a den of thieves.' And those who agreed with the thieves said of Jesus, 'Crucify, crucify him', and of Barabbas the robber, 'Release Barabbas to us'.¹¹² For this reason up to the present time the Jews do not have Jesus (for they did not believe in him). They have, instead, in their company Barabbas the thief from the spiritual evil spirits¹¹³ whom, once held and locked in prison, they requested to be released against themselves. Therefore, the prince of the unbelieving Jews is the thief Barabbas.

24 'And the blind and lame approached him in the temple, and he healed them'.¹¹⁴

Who they are in the simple understanding is clear, but in the analogy of the expositions previously stated morally, it must be said that 'in the temple' of God, that is, in the church, not all see or walk correctly. Some are 'blind'; others are 'lame'. Because they understand their peculiar blindness and lameness and know that it is the work of no other than Christ Jesus and the Word of God that they might be healed, these approach the Word of God to receive healing, and they are healed.

25 'But when the chief priests and scribes saw the marvellous things he did and the children crying out in the temple and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David, they were indignant and said to him: Do you hear what they are saying? And Jesus said to them: certainly. Have you never read, From the mouth of infants and sucklings you have perfected praise?'¹¹⁵

Just as in the historical sense those 'chiefs and scribes' are blameworthy, so too in the church of Christ certain bishops and presbyters are blameworthy. These adorn their own lives minimally and are not dressed in the knowledge of the truth. Seeing the marvellous works of Christ, they nonetheless despise the little children of the church and the small who are praising God and his Christ, and are indignant at their growth and accuse them to Jesus himself as if they were sinning, when they are not sinning, and say, as if to one who does not hear and does not observe all decorum: 'Do you hear what they are saying?' And we will be able to understand this better if we recognize how frequently

¹¹² Lk 23:21, 18.

¹¹³ See Eph 6:12.

¹¹⁴ Mt 21:14.

¹¹⁵ Mt 21:15-16.

the priests assail as unrestrained and blameworthy those who are fervent in spirit and struggle against the infidels up to imprisonment, and despise all dangers, and are zealous for continence and virginity with all virtue, and are inexperienced in speaking, and reproach them, with Jesus, as if they are more righteous than such simple, kind, zealous children. Jesus, however, bears testimony to the children and charges the priests with ignorance of the Scriptures saying: 'Did you never read what is written: From the mouth of infants and sucklings you have perfected praise?' Those who adhere to the church, 'as new born infants desiring the rational and pure milk',¹¹⁶ praise God with their faith and way of life, and fulfil in themselves the words: 'From the mouth of infants and sucklings you have perfected praise'. For God himself perfects 'praise' for himself in such people, giving thanks for whom the Son said to the Father: 'I give thanks to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and shown them to the little ones. Even so, Father, because such was the good will in your sight'.¹¹⁷

26 'And when he left them he went out of the city to Bethany and remained there. But returning to the city in the morning he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree beside the road he went to it and found nothing on it except leaves only, and he said to it: May fruit never be produced from you forever. And it dried up immediately'.¹¹⁸

Who were these whom Jesus 'leaves and departs' from Jerusalem and 'remains' in Bethany, except the chief priests and scribes who knew about 'the marvellous works that Jesus did and the children crying out in the temple', and were, no less, indignant against those who were praising God, as if they were people who did not understand what had been written: 'From the mouth of infants and sucklings you have perfected praise'? And because he left that Jerusalem and was 'outside' it, therefore it fell, and 'stone' could not stand 'upon stone' there.¹¹⁹ And he comes 'into Bethany' to the HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE, that is the church, in which he also lingered and rested, because in Jerusalem, which was filled with such priests and impious people, he had no place 'where he might lay his head'.¹²⁰ And when he had rested in Bethany, in the HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE, after the beginning of founding the church, after Christ had rested a little in it, then he returns 'to the city' which he had left a little earlier. And 'returning, he is hungry and sees a fig tree beside the road', that is, the people of circumcision. And going 'to it, he found no' edible 'fruit on it', but only a form of life; for there were 'leaves' without fruit on the fig tree. And since that tree possessed life, 'he said', as if to one hearing the curse it deserved: 'May fruit never be produced by you forever'. That is, as long as this present age continues, may 'fruit never be produced by you'. The Jewish synagogue, therefore, is sterile. And this will continue 'to the end of the age', until 'the fullness

¹¹⁶ 1 Pt 2:2.

¹¹⁷ Mt 11:25-6.

¹¹⁸ Mt 21:17-19.

¹¹⁹ See Mt 24:2.

¹²⁰ Mt 8:20.

of the Gentiles has entered.'¹²¹ 'And the fig tree withered' while Christ still walked about in this human life and lived among humans as a human.¹²² 'And when the disciples saw it they were amazed,' for they saw the mystery of the withered fig tree with spiritual eyes, and 'they were amazed' not only because it, that is, the Jewish people, had withered, but because it had withered 'immediately.' 'And Jesus answers and says to them: Truly I say to you, if you shall have faith and not be uncertain, not only will you do this about the fig tree, but also if you shall say to this mountain: Remove yourself and cast yourself into the sea, it will happen.'¹²³ The disciples of Christ, therefore, being faithful and confident, make that fig tree dry up, saying to it: 'The Word of God was sent to you first, but because you judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we are turning to the Gentiles' and, leaving it, they make it dry when its vital power passes over to the Gentiles.¹²⁴ And beyond the fact that they were able to dry up the fig tree he promised his disciples further that 'if' they should have 'faith and not' be uncertain, they would say even to a 'mountain' which Christ saw and revealed, that is, hostile powers exalting themselves against human beings: 'Remove yourself and throw yourself into the sea, and it would happen.' For that height of evil, that mountain Satan is removed by individuals who are brought to faith by the word of the disciples of Christ and is cast 'into the sea,' that is into the abyss, the place he deserves. He says of this sea in the Psalm: 'This vast and spacious sea, there the waves will pass through, animals, small with large, that dragon which you formed to mock'¹²⁵ Likewise: 'You broke the heads of the dragons on the waters,' and 'you gave him as food to the people of Ethiopia.'¹²⁶

27 And it is the same Bethany he was staying in where Lazarus, Christ's friend, had been raised from the dead. And everyone who is obedient to the Word of God, who strengthens and dwells in him, is Bethany and the HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE, and Christ remains in him and rests. And perhaps the simple say of that which is written, 'When he left them he departed from Bethany,' How could he be 'outside the city' if he had not 'left' the previous people with whom he had been earlier? But wiser hearers say: He did not at all leave the previous people when he came to be with others, but he left the evil people and sinners, and when he shall be with the just, he comes to be also with others after them and with them. For Jesus also tarries in Bethany, not 'leaving' Bethany he goes 'into the city'; for he was both in Bethany and goes 'into the city'. And Jesus is always hungry among the just, wishing to eat the fruit of the Holy Spirit in them, and they are his food (if I can put it that way), figs which, being hungry, he eats, that is, his love which bears it as fruit, which is the first 'fruit of the Holy Spirit', along with joy, peace, patience, and the remaining fruits.¹²⁷

¹²¹ See Mt 28:20; Rom 11:25.¹²² See Bar 3:38.¹²³ Mt 21:21.¹²⁴ Acts 13:46.¹²⁵ Ps 103:25-6.¹²⁶ Ps 73:13-14.¹²⁷ See Gal 5:22.

So long as we bear this fruit we are not dried up, but if we shall not have produced fruit of this kind for the Lord who comes and seeks to eat such fruit in us, it will be said to us: 'May fruit never be produced from you forever'.

And notice that this fig tree which had only leaves without fruit was 'beside the road'. For so also the land which is beside the road (it had been sown, of course) produced no fruit, since the birds snatched away the seed that was sown.¹²⁸ Therefore, as long as Jesus does not come to some fig tree nor seek its fruit, but patiently works and maintains it, if perhaps it may bring forth fruit, it is not dried up; but if he should come, hungry and seeking fruit, and someone shall be found who has no righteousness except the profession of faith alone, which is 'leaves' without fruit, it is soon dried up, losing even what appeared to be of the faith. And it is possible to see many such people in the church, who have worn the name of the faith for a long time, showing only that they are alive, and are not completely dry. Because they were not bearing fruit, we see them withdrawing from the Word of God completely, and dried up. When the disciples see such a one dried up they are amazed and say, 'How is he dried up immediately?'

Let us say something further about this that is more obvious. In temptations Jesus is seeking fruit from the fig trees that he planted, that is, in persecutions he seeks the confession and testimony of the faithful, and when a foolish prostitute shall have called out above someone, Christ seeks in him the fruit of continence and chastity which Joseph produced when his mistress was mad with love over him.¹²⁹ And thus in each individual temptation understand Christ to come to Christians in the temptations, hungry and seeking the fruit of virtue. And the person who shall not be prepared to present fruit to the hungry Christ, either of confession or purity, immediately is dried up; for the one who denies in persecution is dried up. Likewise, one who commits fornication is dried up, even though he formerly bore the appearance of faith as if covered with leaves. And the disciples are amazed over such as these at how soon they are dried up. And frequently someone has stood as a fig tree for many years and was not dried up, but when Christ comes to him at the end of his life, in temptations of course, and seeks fruit in him and does not find it, he is dried up and suddenly loses the life of so many years. And this happens that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled which says: 'It will be given to him who has and he will have abundantly; but he who does not have, even the very thing that he has will be removed from him,' so that what he has may not be unprofitable.¹³⁰ And each disciple, 'if' he shall have 'faith and is not' uncertain also causes the fig tree to dry up and what follows it.

28 It is a task to show how a disciple of Christ seeking fruit in a fig tree and not finding it might say to it: 'May fruit never be produced from you forever,' so

¹²⁸ See Mt 13:4.

¹²⁹ See Gn 39:7–12.

¹³⁰ Mt 25:29.

that 'immediately' it is withered. Imagine with me, for example, someone who professes the things that are of the faith and who claims to eat and drink in the name of Jesus, in his very presence, and claims that Jesus has taught 'in the streets' of his heart.¹³¹ Let a disciple of Christ come in this way, seeking the fruit of wisdom and of the Word in him in accordance with his declaration that he teaches the things that are of God. And questioning and examining him by the word, the disciple finds no fruit in him and, therefore, exposing him to be devoid of Christ to those who see, let him show by the word that it is not possible that there be any fruit in him 'forever' who has been hurt by his own choice. Just as 'Peter said to' Simon, drying him up who appeared to be one who professed Christ: 'May your money be with you in the underworld, because you thought by your money to possess the gift of God.' 'For your heart is not right before God.' 'I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.'¹³² It is better that a deceptive fig tree which is thought to be alive but does not bear fruit as living, when it has been shown to be fruitless, be dried up by the words of the disciples of Christ and made manifest, than that, still thought to be alive by reason of a fictional profession of faith, it steal away 'the hearts of the innocent'¹³³ and of those who are easily seduced by such. And I think also that there is a mountain in each unbelieving and unjust person which is removed by the words of the disciples of Christ and is cast 'into the sea' of its torments. And the disciples of Jesus receive 'all things whatever' they ask 'in prayer believing', as if the disciples of Christ ask for nothing unnecessary, and as if, believing in the teacher, they ask for nothing other than the great and heavenly things, just as he himself said to his disciples: 'Ask for the great things, and the little things will be added to you; ask for the heavenly things, and the earthly things will be added to you.'¹³⁴

29 Now Mark seems to have added something else (so far as the text is concerned) when he writes in this same passage saying that when Jesus 'sees the fig tree from afar having leaves he goes' as if to find something 'on it'. But 'when he came' and found nothing 'except leaves' only ('for it was not the season of figs'), 'he responded and said to it: May no one ever eat fruit from you forever'.¹³⁵ Someone will say, If it was not the 'season' of figs, how does Jesus come as if he will find something 'on it'? And how did he justly say to it: 'May no one ever eat fruit from you forever'. Let us respond to these things to the contrary that these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit enumerated by the apostle: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, graciousness, and self-restraint.¹³⁶ All these are imparted at some time in their season. And it is better when, in circumstances that are adverse and do not encourage fruit-bearing, someone, because he is sufficiently aided by the Word, is able nonetheless to produce the

¹³¹ See Lk 13:26.

¹³² Acts 8:20, 21, 23.

¹³³ See Rom 16:18.

¹³⁴ See Resch (1967) 111, Agraphon 86. A common agraphon in Origen.

¹³⁵ Mk 11:13-14.

¹³⁶ See Gal 5:22, 23.

fruits of the Holy Spirit. What I mean is this: one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is love. It is the season of this fruit when it is not difficult to produce the fruit of love and to love a person who loves; and that is indeed the fruit of the Holy Spirit, nevertheless it is in its season. But if someone who is a believer is incited to hatred and is afflicted and suffers treachery, and loves the one plotting against him, or certainly if someone is bad-mannered and deserves hatred, but that just person does not hate the person who is such but (as the son of him who 'causes his sun to rise on the good and the evil') even at that time loves him, he is blessed since he gives the fruit of love not in the season of figs. Joy, too, can be treated in the same way. One bears the fruit of joy when nothing provokes him to sadness.¹³⁷ When present circumstances, however, provoke one to sadness or timidity and gloominess, but, aided by the Word, he advances to such an extent that he is joyful even in the time of sad things and glories in the time of insult or punishment and is mindful in every time of danger of that which is said: 'Rejoice always', a Christian of this kind is blessed because he bears the fruit of joy even when it is not the season of figs.

All the fruits of the Holy Spirit are to be treated in the same way. For Christ wants his faithful ones to be better than all human nature, and demands of them, beyond nature also (if I may put it this way) the works of God more than those of men. For this reason he also says to all whom he calls to blessedness: 'I said, You are gods and all sons of the Most High'.¹³⁸ But censuring those who do not wish to be gods or sons of the Most High, he says: 'But you will die as human beings',¹³⁹ for in each individual sin, since we are 'flesh and' walk 'in a human way', we labour for nothing other than that we die, and it is true that 'if' we live 'according to the flesh we will die', just as the apostle teaches.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Klostermann suggests, on the basis of the Greek version, that something is missing in this sentence.

¹³⁸ Ps 81:6.

¹³⁹ Ps 81:7.

¹⁴⁰ 1 Cor 3:3; Rom 8:13.

Book 17 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 21:23–22:33

1 'And when he went into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people approached him as he was teaching and said: In what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? and Jesus answers and says, I will also ask you one word which, if you will tell me, I too will tell you in what authority I do these things: Whence was the baptism of John? From heaven or from men? And they thought within themselves saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say to us: Why, then, did you not believe him? But if we shall say, From Men, we fear the crowd; for they all hold John as a prophet. And responding they said to Jesus: We do not know. And he said to them: Neither do I tell you in what authority I am doing these things'.¹

Since three evangelists write the same thing as necessary, it is worth considering what 'the chief priests and elders of the people' understood when they asked Jesus not one question but place two before him. One was: 'In what authority are you doing these things?' and the other was: 'Who gave you this authority?' And what did the Lord intend, because in this case alone he asked a counter question so that he not respond to their question? That the understanding of this passage is not simple and easy, but is mysterious and deep, will be clear from what we shall show.

The simple say that, knowing that there are two general powers, one of God and the other of the devil, 'the chief priests and elders of the people' were asking 'in which' of these two authorities he was working those wonders and from whom he had received it. So, the Lord, in order not to give an answer to their question, asked a question in response so that he might both reprove the questioners as those who had not acted rightly when they were unwilling to believe in John, and dismiss them as unworthy of his answer, so that it would appear reasonable to them not to answer.

¹ Mt 21:23–7.

But someone will say against these things that it was ridiculous to ask 'in what authority' Jesus was doing these things for he could not answer that it was 'in the authority' of the devil. I will not say that Jesus did not give this answer, but that not even 'the man of sin' himself, 'who opposes and is exalted over everything which is said to be God or is worshipped', would answer truthfully that he works all his miracles, 'signs and prodigies' with which he terrifies and seduces, 'if it possible, even the elect' of God, 'in the authority' of the devil.² If not even he, therefore, would say that he performs false signs and prodigies 'in the authority' of the devil 'in all seduction of iniquity for those who are perishing',³ how much more would the Lord and Saviour (even if he had not asked a question in response) give any other answer than 'in the authority' of God? It seems quite insignificant to me, then, that Christ did not respond to their so obvious reasoning and asks them a question.

But if someone should say that the chief priests did not ask that they might learn when they hear, but that they might frighten him, as for example, if someone does something among us which does not please us, we say to him: Who ordered you to do this? not wishing to hear, but frightening him so that he might desist from the act knowing that no one ordered him. In the same way, the 'chief priests' were asking the Lord to frighten him rather than to question him, so that he would stop doing the work he is doing, knowing, as it were, that he is not doing it 'in the authority' of God. But also, what is that which Christ answered: You tell me this, 'and I will tell you in what authority I am doing these things'? Jesus would never have said this if he had not perceived that they were asking to frighten him and not to learn.

2 Consider, therefore, whether this passage should be understood in this way: There are diverse powers which, in general, are two: one on the side of God, the other on the side of the devil; specifically, there are more and they are difficult to understand. The apostle, glorifying Christ, writes about these to the Colossians saying, In him all things were created 'which are in heaven and on earth, whether visible or invisible, whether seats, or dominions, or principalities, or powers'.⁴ He did not say one principality, or one dominion, or one seat, or one power, but many. And just as there are many powers on the side of God, so also on the side of the devil there are many principalities and many powers, as the apostle testifies saying, 'Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places'.⁵ And I think that all of the same names which are with God are also with the devil. There is perhaps a power from all the powers which ministered to Christ, and another which worked with those prophets who performed signs. There was not one power with them all, but perhaps there was one with these and another with those, according to the worth of their faith, which God alone knew. And one and the

² See 2 Thess 2:3, 4; Mk 13:22.

³ 2 Thess 2:10.

⁴ Col 1:15-17.

⁵ Eph 6:12.

same power did not work in all those performing miracles, but in some it was this one and in some it was another; and perhaps for things inferior an inferior one, and for things more eminent, a more eminent one. 'The chief priests', therefore, and 'the elders of the people', were cognizant of the plurality of powers and the ranks of heavenly mysteries, whether from the tradition of the many, or from some secret traditions (and whether rationally or irrationally I do not know). They were excited when they saw Jesus not without some power subject to him, performing many prodigies, and therefore, wanted to hear from Christ the sort of power it was and its characteristic feature. And if 'the chief priests' had been anyone holy (such as Aaron, Eleazar, or Phineas, or anyone of those who had completed their function well), not tempting but desiring to learn and worthy of knowledge of this kind, without doubt Jesus would have declared the mysteries of the powers and their differences, and he would have made manifest also the reason for the contrary powers and their differences.

3 But since 'the chief priests and elders of the people' there were not worthy to hear such mysteries, therefore, he did not give them an answer but asked a question in return so that he might have a reason not to respond to them since they did not answer the question put to them about John. And I ask whether each of those who performed signs by some 'power' always performed them by the same power, or at first by that one, but then advanced to another greater power. Nevertheless, the Saviour appears to have performed all his signs by one 'power' which he received from the Father, for the words 'he answered and said: I do not tell you in what power I do these things', teaches that he did them by one 'power'. But he did not declare 'in what kind' of power. Neither did he make its unique quality manifest nor what set that power apart from the other powers by which the prophets before him performed miracles. And now Christ is considered to be in the temple of the church. He teaches in it and there are some 'chief priests' like those chief priests, and elders like those elders, and they question Jesus and do not receive an answer from him because they do not deserve to know what they desire. Likewise, I ask whether Jesus, in his desire to get rid of them, fortuitously proposed this question to them about John, as if he might have proposed any other question whatsoever? Or, did he, of necessity, ask them specifically about John for their benefit? It seems to me that he did not ask them this fortuitously, but asked because John was 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths strait'.⁶ He was, in addition, the one of whom God said through the prophet: 'Behold I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you.'⁷ This is why I think he asked about him, not, indeed, without knowing that they were thinking to say: 'We do not know', according

⁶ Mt 3:3.

⁷ Mk 1:2; see Is 40:3.

to what is written, but indicating, so far as they were concerned, that he was from men as it were. So, as if to those responding that he was 'from men' he introduced the following parable.

4 What do you think? A certain man had two sons; and coming to the first he said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard, but he answered and said, I do not want to, but later, moved by repentance, he went. And coming to the other son he said the same thing, and that one answered and said: I will go, master, and he did not go. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to him, The first. Jesus said to them: Truly I say to you, that publicans and prostitutes will precede you into the kingdom of God. John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him; but the publicans and prostitutes believed him. But you, when you saw, did not even repent afterwards to believe him.'⁸

Only Matthew records this parable, which includes, as it seems to me, Israel who does not believe the words of God and the people who will believe from the Gentiles, for these are the two sons whom God had, as if he were a human being displaying the ways of human beings. This man, therefore, 'going to the first' son whom 'he acquired' 'at first,'⁹ whom 'he foreknew and foreordained,'¹⁰ 'said' to him: 'Son, go today and work in my vineyard'. And he delayed, avoiding this vineyard because of the heat and labours it contained, and 'said, I do not want to, later', about the end, 'repenting' for having said, 'I do not want to' to his father, he went into the vineyard and performed the 'will of his father'. But when the first responded, 'I do not want to', the father went 'to the other' and 'said the same thing'. Thus, the second 'responded, Certainly, master', but he did not go to the vineyard of the word and into the field of the father. And it is clear that the one who said, 'I do not want to', but 'later' 'felt remorse' and went and worked in the vineyard 'fulfilled the will of the father' not in words, but in actions; and the one who promised with words but did not act with works, refused to do 'the will of the father'. And consider if you can use this parable of those who promise little or nothing, neither virginity nor another spiritual action related to the Gospel, but show by their works what they did not promise from the beginning so far as words go, and conversely of those who make great promises but do nothing related to their promise of this kind. For someone says: Virginity is beyond me, therefore, I do not want it, and: It is beyond my power to renounce this life and have leisure for spiritual words; 'later', reconsidering, he gives himself over to better things than he appeared to profess at first. Others, however, rashly promise many things, but in their works, act contrary to their promises.

5 And after the parable he says of him who said: 'I do not want to', but 'later' reconsidered and went: 'Truly I say to you that publicans and prostitutes will precede you into the kingdom of God'. And to him who said: 'I will go, master'

⁸ Mt 21:28-32.

⁹ See Dt 32:6; Ps 73:2.

¹⁰ See Rom 8:29.

and did not go, he mentions this: 'John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him'. Again, he said of the first: 'And the publicans and prostitutes believed him', but to him who said: 'I go, master', and did not go, he said: 'But you, seeing, did not even repent later that you should believe him'.

And consider also in relation to his statement: 'They will precede you into the kingdom of God', that he did not exclude the Jews from entering 'into the kingdom of God' at some time; for no one is said to precede him into some place who does not follow him through the same place. Notice, therefore, that perhaps this word indicates that 'when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered', then 'all Israel will be saved'.¹¹ And understand with me not those who are Israelites 'according to the flesh', but those who by the nobility of their soul are understood to be Israel in faith and good works.

6 'Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard' and what follows.¹²

This parable will seem sufficiently clear to those who do not discuss it fully nor scrutinize the individual words if it is understood in the following way: The people which preceded us, when it was a portion of God, was a vine of God which had been planted by God and God's protection which existed around it was its hedge. The tower was the temple, the press the place of libations, and the husbandmen were the priests and wise men of the people. But the sojourn of the Lord when the Lord, who was with them in the cloud by day and in the column of fire through the night¹³ until he had planted them when he brought them 'to' his 'holy mountain' and 'to his tabernacle'¹⁴ never appeared to them later in the same way. And 'the time of the fruits' approaching was the time of the prophets seeking fruits, demanding from the farmers and from the vine itself that those who had received the law should show if they had lived according to it. And the servants sent to the farmers 'to receive the fruits' were the prophets of an earlier time, whom the chief priests and wise men of the people injured, beating them, and killing and stoning some. And the other more numerous servants after them was the time of the many prophets whose names are written in the second book of Chronicles, and in Jeremiah, and in the Twelve, and in Daniel, and someone will say that also Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were prophets at that time.¹⁵ And they, therefore, likewise abused these numerous prophets, beating, killing, and stoning them. And last of all the householder sent 'his son' Jesus Christ, who could inspire respect in them. But the chief priests, elders of the people, and the wise men 'seeing the son', were not at all imperceptive of his dignity, but understood him to be the heir. And they dared to kill him, so that they themselves might be made lords over that vineyard. 'They' cast him out, judging him to be from abroad and outside the affairs of the Israelites, and 'killed' him. But 'the Lord

¹¹ Rom 11:25-6.

¹² Mt 21:33.

¹³ See Ex 13:21.

¹⁴ See Ps 42:3.

¹⁵ See Dan 1:6.

of the vineyard' whom 'they killed' returns immediately, rising from the dead, and destroys the 'wicked' farmers wickedly. He entrusted his 'vineyard', that is, the others from the Jewish people who believed, 'to other farmers', that is, to his apostles who give 'the fruits' to their Lord 'in' their 'time'.

Likewise, he teaches them from the prophecy that he was rejected by those builders but was chosen by God and made 'head' of the whole building, and a 'head marvellous in the eyes' of those who are able to see him. Thus prophesying of the faith of the Gentiles, he says to the teachers of the Jews who do not believe in him: 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits.'¹⁶ Someone who is 'spiritual'¹⁷ and is prepared for discussing 'all things' will be able to say many things on this text, knocking on its obscurity, that is its closed door, and by seeking he will find.¹⁸ We, in our inferiority, make the following conjecture on the passage: The 'householder' is God, of whom it is written: 'The Lord your God humoured you as a man would humour his son.'¹⁹ For thus because he humoured humans so that he might benefit human morals, he is said to be a 'man' in some parables, as a father speaks of childish things with his small son so that he might descend to the words of his son and humour him. For this reason, (I think) all the just precepts which God delivers to human beings are childish, as it were, so far as the proper justice²⁰ of God is concerned.

7 What is different in respect to the vineyard which 'the householder planted', therefore, besides the first farmers and the second? That vineyard was first handed over to unjust farmers, but afterwards 'to other farmers' who produce 'its fruit in its season', according to what the Lord says: 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruit.'²¹ Do you think we ought to say that the kingdom of God and the vineyard which is taken from the first farmers and given to another 'nation', are the same or should we think the 'vineyard' is one thing and the kingdom of God another? Let us see first, therefore, since we have proven from the Scriptures that the people are called a vine, if everything in the passage can agree with an explanation of that kind. For Isaiah says: 'I will now sing to my beloved a song of my beloved vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fertile place. And I encircled it with a hedge, and I staked it, and I planted a Sorec vine', and I built a tower in its midst and I dug a wine-vat in it, and I waited that it might produce grapes, but it produced thorns.'²² And after some words he says the following: 'For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the man of Judah is the beloved new vine.'²³

I have quoted the song of Isaiah, therefore, wishing to consider it in relation to this parable. Can this vineyard be understood in relation to that vineyard?

¹⁶ Mt 21:43.

¹⁷ See 1 Cor 2:15.

¹⁸ See Mt 7:7.

¹⁹ Dt 1:31.

²⁰ Here, and earlier in the sentence where I have written 'just precepts', the Latin text has the simple plural 'justices'.

²¹ Mt 21:43.

²² Is 5:1.

²³ Is 1-2, 7.

Notice that they have some things that are similar, but others are dissimilar, so that by noticing the differences in the similarities in relation to the dissimilarities, you may learn the meaning of the Scripture. These things are similar: 'He planted a vineyard, and he surrounded it with a hedge, and he dug a wine-vat in it, and he built a tower'. Isaiah is dissimilar, however, in that the planter accuses the vineyard itself, saying: 'I waited that it would produce grapes, but it produced thorns'. In the Gospel, however, it is clearly not the vineyard that is accused, as if it did not give 'fruit in its season', but 'the farmers', who 'took' the 'servants' of the householder and afflicted various abuses on them, and last of all killed the son of the householder. Again, in Isaiah, the vineyard itself is threatened when the Word says: 'I will remove its hedge and it will be for plunder, and I will destroy its wall, and it will be for trampling on', and the rest, but also when he promises that he will command 'the clouds' that 'they not rain on' that 'vineyard', which was, according to the prophet, 'the house of Israel and the man of Judah', which produced no fruit.²⁴ In the Gospel, however, we do not find that the vineyard suffers anything, but still pursuing the providence of God that it can give its fruits to the householder; for it has been removed from the wicked farmers and given to a better nation. And the farmers receive all the wrath, when they²⁵ say: 'For when the householder shall come, he will wickedly destroy the wicked farmers'. They were either constrained by the argument of the Word and the sequence of the parable or they prophesied unwillingly about themselves that, 'When he shall come he will wickedly destroy the wicked farmers', and making provision for the vine 'he will give' it to other farmers. Likewise, at a later time Jeremiah also says to the sinning people: 'I planted you a completely pure fruit-bearing vineyard; how did you change to bitterness, a foreign vineyard?'²⁶ You see, therefore, that in the prophets the Jewish people are called a vineyard and the threatening of the householder occurs against the vineyard, but in the Gospel the vineyard is not reproached at all, but its farmers. And the person who wants to consider the words of the Gospel carefully, will by no means be able to prove that the vineyard is people. Rather perhaps according to the Gospel the vineyard is the kingdom of God, that is, the doctrine which contains the providence of God has been implanted in the holy Scriptures. For the statement: 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruit' clearly shows (in my opinion) that the mysteries of the kingdom of God are the 'vineyard', that is, the law and the prophets and all the divine Scriptures, which 'the lord of the vineyard delivered' first, indeed, to the 'farmers', that prior people, because to them first 'the oracles of God were entrusted',²⁷ and to those nations second who produce their 'fruit'. The hedge of their vineyard has suffered nothing such as is written in the prophet who says: 'I will remove its hedge, and it will be for trampling'.²⁸

²⁴ Is 5:5-7.

²⁶ Jer 2:21.

²⁵ That is, those hearing Jesus' parable. See Mt 21:41.

²⁷ Rom 3:2.

²⁸ Is 5:5.

Consider, therefore, whether we can perhaps say, by natural reason, that the vineyard is all the oracles of God. And, subsequently in accord with that same natural reason, the 'fruits' of that vineyard are the irreproachable life of humans and the most outstanding morals. The erudition and all the letters of the Scriptures are the 'hedge' from without put around the vineyard, so that the vineyard might not be seen by those who are on the outside, especially 'its fruits' which are hidden. The profundity of the oracles of God is the 'wine-vat' of its vineyard in which those who have advanced from the oracles of God and have produced 'their fruit' pour in their studies as if they were 'fruits' which they collect from the oracles themselves. And I think the word about God himself and the dispensation of Christ and the temple of divine meaning contained in it is the 'tower' built in the vineyard, which contains the ascent, the prominence, and the height above the vineyard itself, the hedge, and the wine-vat. And I think the Saviour speaks of such a tower in another passage of the Gospel, where he says, 'Who of you wishing to build a tower does not first compute' if he is able first to lay the foundation and to complete it, 'lest perhaps' 'those seeing it begin to deride' him who did not finish it. For the one who wishes to speak about God ought to consider if he is able to complete the explanation of all the questions asked about God once he begins, lest perhaps when he begins the doctrines of piety he leave the 'tower' of God unfinished and does not build a cornice on it, for if he has not build a cornice on it, someone, scandalized by his understanding of God, may fall and die. 'He delivered' this 'vineyard to farmers', that is, to the people before us, as much to priests as to laity, 'and he went on' to his lookout, giving 'the farmers' opportunities of bringing forth 'fruits' when the season of fruits approached, because he himself 'planted' it, and 'placed a hedge around' it, and 'dug a wine-vat' in it, and 'built a tower' in it. For the seasons of 'fruits' approach in relation to each one, but I think also in general to all people. But to explain the approach of the season 'of fruits' as it truly is, is beyond our ability and is the task of a much purer heart, nevertheless, we begin in this way in relation to our power, beginning with each person.

8 Understand with me, therefore, that the Word of God has planted a 'vineyard', as it were, in each soul; for the vineyards are the opportunities of all the themes which are necessary for salvation. Therefore, just as in vineyards there is a certain time when the foliage comes forth, and another time when it shows the beginning of fruit still small, and another when the blooms are seen, and another when the fruit is sour, and another when it changes, and another when it is the time for gathering the 'fruits' that are mature and ready for wine to be made, so too among human beings accordingly the first of life is the time related to infancy. At that time, the vine shows nothing except that it has the power of life in itself. But it is the time of germination when one begins to be capable of speaking, and when the soul of a child brings forth works, to such a degree also

the vine which is at work in it, that is the Word of God implanted by nature, brings forth and produces indications of future clusters of grapes still blooming and giving the sweet odour (of future virtue) in the first stages. Afterwards, however, they also become sour, when there is wickedness in youth. It is not permanent, but it overtakes one of necessity because of age, but (if I may so speak) it always awakens one to virtue. If someone should chew on this, it sets their teeth on edge, according to the prophecy.²⁹ But if he shall not use it, but always leads it to virtue by another way, as it were, he will begin to alter in part, but he also does not have a perfect cluster of grapes. But there is also some zealous state after advancement when the vine brings forth the works of mature fruits and zealous clusters of grapes, the differing and perfect virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, and the other virtues which the apostle refers to as well as many other Scriptures.³⁰ For there is some cluster of grapes in relation to which it is written: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', and another: 'Blessed are those who mourn', and another: 'Blessed are the gentle', and another: 'Blessed are the peace-makers', and another: 'Blessed are the pure in heart'.³¹ And why is it necessary to enumerate the individual reasons for the blessings, as if enumerating differing bunches of grapes? But we have said these things wishing to understand and to show what the clause means: 'And when the season of fruits had approached'.

9 But it belongs to the householder alone truly to know when 'the season of fruits' of each person has drawn near, or when it is still far off. And if we should make a careful examination, comparing the seasons, from the time we were called to the entire time of our faith, we would be able to see how some, when they ought 'to be teachers, in relation to the time, again have need' to be taught 'the nature of the elements of the first principles of the oracles of God'.³² Thus, when some ought already to be producing fruit, so far as the time of the dispensation of God goes, and in relation to the calling of all, they either have none at all or, when they ought to have ripe fruit, they are blooming out of season and have sour grapes not in their season. And if you have understood this in relation to certain individual persons, how much more ought the statement, 'And when the season of fruits had drawn near', be understood to be transferred to that people who at that time accepted the law through Moses, since 'the season of fruits had' also 'drawn near' for them formerly, and 'he sent his servants to' the previous 'farmers' to whom 'the oracles of God' had been entrusted,³³ that 'he might receive the fruits' of each vine. It is easy to say that he calls the prophets 'servants'. But it is appropriate to ask how they are sent 'to the farmers to receive the fruits' of the vineyard, for someone will say that the prophets were not sent 'to receive the fruits', but rather to cultivate them. Consider, therefore, if we can say that spiritual fruits and divine offerings are given

²⁹ See Jer 38:29.

³⁰ See Gal 5:22.

³¹ Mt 5:3, 4, 5, 9, 8.

³² Heb 5:12.

³³ Rom 3:2.

by these prophets who were cultivating the vineyard. They had been sent that they might offer the 'fruits' of the people to God, as if they were priests. The 'farmers' of that people, however, 'took one and beat him,' as 'Zedekiah son of Chenaanah did striking Micaiah on the cheek' when he also said to the one prophesying falsely: 'What sort of spirit of God is it who has spoken in you?'³⁴ 'And they killed another between the temple and the altar,'³⁵ as they did Zechariah, and 'another they stoned,' just as Azariah, son of Jehoiada, the priest, as it is written in the second book of the Chronicles. For when 'the Spirit of God clothed himself with Azariah the son of Jehoiada, the priest, and he arose before the people and said, Thus says the Lord, Why do you bypass the commandments of the Lord? You will not prosper. You have forsaken the Lord, he will also forsake you.' They laid hands on him and stoned him at the command of Joash the king in the court of the house of the Lord. And Joash did not remember the mercy which Jehoiada, his father, had shown him, and he killed his son. And as he died, he said, 'May the Lord see and judge.'³⁶

10 'Again he sent other servants, more than the former, and they did likewise to them.'³⁷

All the Scriptures are filled with the things they did to the prophets whom 'he sent' to the people that they might offer their fruits to God through their prayers, as if they were the most holy priests. 'And last of all he sent his son,' saying, 'they will respect my son.'³⁸ But you will ask how God sends his Son and says, 'They will respect my son,' as if he were one who did not know in advance what was to happen to him, for the Jews are seen in the present text not to have respected him, and God is found in this text not to have known the future. But to say that something else happened is impious. On the other hand, it is false to say that 'the farmers' respected him, for 'when the farmers see the son, they say among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours.'³⁹ Perhaps we may solve it in the following way. It says thus in general, as if all Jews will kill Christ: 'But the farmers said: This is the heir; come let us kill him.' Nevertheless, not all Jews killed Christ, but those who were Jews according to the flesh. Jews according to the spirit did not kill Christ, but believed in him. So, in general, it says, as if of all the farmers: 'They will respect my son.' Nevertheless, not all respected him, but only those who were Jews according to the spirit, who believed in him, so that the words, 'They will respect my son' may be seen fulfilled in those Jews who understand Christ and believe in him. And the words, 'This is the heir; come let us kill him' may be fulfilled in those who see Christ and recognize the Son of God and kill him nonetheless.

11 But at the same time someone will ask, Who are those 'farmers' who said: 'This is the heir; come let us kill him,' for the Jews do not appear to have killed

³⁴ 3 (1) Kgs 22:24.

³⁷ Mt 21:36.

³⁵ Mt 23:35.

³⁸ Mt 21:37.

³⁶ 2 Chron 24:20-2.

³⁹ Mt 21:38.

him as if he were the son of the householder, God. And someone will say in response to this that when they were discussing who he might be with one another, some said: He is the Christ. Others responded to them: 'When Christ shall come, no one knows whence he is; but we know whence this man is.'⁴⁰ So, because they were goaded by his signs and wonders, they understood him to be the Christ, but they did not confess him. And someone recollecting also the things written of Herod when he had learned from the magi that a king 'of the Jews' had been born, will see that those who killed Christ recognized that he was the Son of God, nevertheless, dared to plot against him. For also Herod, when he learned thoroughly from the scribes that 'the Christ is born' 'in Bethlehem' and agreeing that it was the Christ who was born, sent them forth saying: 'Go and inquire carefully of the child, that I too may come and worship him,'⁴¹ but nevertheless he dared to plot against the child, while he believed that he was the Christ. For if he had not believed, he would not have killed the infants 'in Bethlehem from two years old and younger, in relation to the time that he had learned from the magi.'⁴² So also other Jews knew him well, according to what we have said, but although they knew him well they did not divulge it so that their word might also reach others, but as if they were those who did not know him, 'they cast' the son 'out of the vineyard and killed him'. Now the words, 'They cast him out of the vineyard' seem to me to mean something like this: so far as they were concerned they considered him to be foreign to the vineyard and the farmers, when they passed the sentence of death against him. 'And Jesus said to them: when the householder comes, what will he do to those farmers?' And they answered, judged by their own mouth, 'He will wickedly destroy those wicked men and will give the vineyard to other farmers'. Or indeed they prophesied, as Caiaphas the priest (who 'spoke' the truth, not 'of himself', but he prophesied because he was priest that year'⁴³), so also those did not prophesy on their own against themselves, that 'the oracles of God'⁴⁴ were to be taken from them and given to the Gentiles who will give fruit 'in its season'.

12 'Jesus says to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was done by the Lord and it is marvellous in our eyes?'⁴⁵

Because, therefore, those priests thought they were the builders of the people, although they were not commendable builders (for they would not have rejected a stone of that kind if they had been commendable), nevertheless he says of those Scriptures that he has been set as that 'stone' and, while rejected by them, the Father has erected him as the 'head', so that he holds together the two corners of the Old and New Testaments and the building of the two peoples; for this is what it means: 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner'.

⁴⁰ Jn 7:27.

⁴¹ See Mt 2:4, 5, 8.

⁴² Mt 2:16.

⁴³ See Jn 11:51.

⁴⁴ Rom 3:2.

⁴⁵ Mt 21:42.

And that stone is a gift, given by God to the whole building, and it is 'marvellous in the eyes of us' who are able to see him with the eyes of the mind. If, therefore, it is true that 'the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to other farmers who will give back to him fruit in their seasons', doubtless 'the kingdom of God', that is, the Word of God, is given to no one except to those producing its fruit, and the kingdom of God is given to no one who is ruled by sin. But someone will say, If 'the kingdom of God' is given to no one who does not 'produce its fruit', how was it given to that people from whom it was taken away? Consider if we can give a reasonable explanation to the great difficulty this question poses. Consider that when the vineyard was handed over to that people it was not said, 'And' he gave 'it to farmers', but as follows: 'He gave it out on contract' [or, as it is in Greek: He entrusted] 'it to farmers'.⁴⁶ Here, however, it is: 'The kingdom will be taken away from you and will be given to other farmers'. The problem would be unsolvable if, as he said there, 'he gave it out on contract' [or, 'entrusted it'], likewise he had also said here, 'he will give it out on contract' [or, 'entrust it'] 'to other farmers', or as he said here: 'He will give it to other farmers', and there he had thus said: He gave 'it to farmers', because what is given is understood to be given gratuitously, but what is given out on contract [and entrusted] is not at all given gratuitously. Therefore, to whom he [entrusted or] gave it out on contract he did not at all [entrust or] give it out on contract as if to the elect and faithful. To the latter he gave it, he gave it in connection with his judgement of election based on their merit.

13 'And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parable, they knew that he was speaking about them, and seeking to lay hold of him, they feared the crowds because they held him as a prophet'.⁴⁷

And whoever wishes 'to lay hold of' the Word of truth treacherously, so that they may kill him, are never able to lay hold of him or to kill him because of the large number of people who think he is the 'prophet of God', the herald of truth, and the dispenser of salvation, and therefore hold him in their hearts. These also rescue him from those who want to seize him and overpower him.

Next, one must know that there is a difference in those wishing to lay hold of Jesus. The 'chief priests and Pharisees' were seeking 'to lay hold of him' in one way, and in another, that bride in the Song of Songs who was seeking him and, rising up, was going around in the city, 'in the streets and markets'. She found him with difficulty shortly after she passed by the guards who go around 'the city', and when she found him she held him, at which time she also said: 'I held him and did not let go until I brought him into the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me'.⁴⁸ This same bride speaks as follows in the beginning of the Song of Songs: 'I held him in the house of my mother and in the chamber of her who conceived me', and around the end of

⁴⁶ Mt 21:33. Klostermann set this in brackets because it was an explanation of the translator.

⁴⁷ Mt 21:45-6.

⁴⁸ See Cant 3:2-4.

the same book, as if she has now advanced and will hold him in another way that is better than at first, she says: 'I said I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its heights'.⁴⁹ And that you may understand that 'the chief priests and Pharisees' are those who wish 'to seize him' but did not seize him, consider that it is possible to grasp and 'seize' other words besides the word of Christ and separate them from the meaning (of those, of course, who hold some other doctrine of some sort outside the truth), and it is possible to make it obviously invalid. No one, however, can grasp (that is, understand) the word of truth, or 'lay hold of it' (that is, refute it), or separate it (from the understanding of the believers) or put it to death (that is, destroy it). For the word of the apostle says: 'The spiritual person judges all things, but is judged by no one'.⁵⁰ He judges, destroys, and refutes other words, whether of the wise of this world or of the heretics, and the one who is in Christ is not judged nor is his understanding grasped or defiled by those who intend to make it invalid, 'for who has known the mind of the Lord, who will instruct him?'⁵¹ And it is clear that the person who will instruct the mind of anyone, first knows it and after this will instruct it. But no one knows 'the mind of the Lord'. Therefore, there is no one 'who may instruct him'.

14 Those who 'held him as a prophet' understand something about him which is true, but they also do not understand his greatness. For Jesus was indeed a prophet, as is shown by those who understand what is written: 'The Lord your God will lift up from your brothers a prophet for you like me; listen to him in all things that he shall say'. And whoever 'shall not listen to that prophet shall perish from the people'.⁵² Nevertheless, his eminence was not in the fact that he was a prophet, but in the fact that he was the Son of God, 'the firstborn of every creature, in whom all things were created in heaven and on earth'⁵³ and the rest. And his eminence was in the fact that he was wisdom, saying: 'God created me in the beginning of his ways, for his works', before he made anything, and what follows.⁵⁴ 'The chief priests and Pharisees' fear those 'crowds' who are so wise about him and prepared to fight for him against his assailants. They are not able to seize Jesus stealthily when they want 'to lay hold of' him. And although the crowds held 'him as a prophet' they understood nothing great about his divinity. The chief priests and Pharisees, on the other hand, were not even able to comprehend the knowledge of those who knew him 'in part', disclosing nothing worthy of him.⁵⁵

I say this of those who are truly 'for' him. Those, however, who have false understandings of him and think that he glorifies himself are not 'for' him. Such are the heretics who combine the significance and substance of the Father and the Son, and say the Father and the Son are one, separating those whom they think are one only in thought and names. Declaring that they think great

⁴⁹ Cant 3:4; 7:8.

⁵³ Col 1:15, 16.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 2:15.

⁵⁴ Prov 8:22.

⁵¹ 1 Cor 2:16.

⁵⁵ See 1 Cor 13:9.

⁵² See Dt 18:15, 19.

things about him they speak 'iniquity against the height',⁵⁶ and when they speak badly of God they are not 'for' him, for they are not 'with' him, and, therefore, they are 'against' him, as it says: 'The one who is not with me is against me'.⁵⁷ So too, if those who do not understand what is true about Christ gather in the name of Jesus, they scatter rather than gather, just as he himself says: 'The one who does not gather with me scatters'.⁵⁸ And notice that he did not say simply, 'He who does not gather scatters', but with a careful addition: 'He who does not gather with me', for one who gathers ought to gather with Christ. But what do you think it might be to gather with Christ, if you have considered what the apostle says: 'When you have gathered and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver him who is such to Satan for the destruction of the flesh'.⁵⁹ His statement, 'when you are gathered, and my spirit with the power of Jesus Christ', makes clear what it means to gather with him. And it is not fitting to say to those former people, 'when you are gathered with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ', for those who gather with those who discern Christ ineptly do not gather with Christ.

You will have a clearer sense of this in Luke who says: 'And he was teaching daily in the temple; and the chief priests and scribes and elders of the people wanted to destroy him, and they did not find what they might do, for all the people were listening to him with eager expectation'.⁶⁰ It is shown in these words that those who are wrongfully present in the Jewish crowds and are named chief priests and scribes and elders of the people, enemies of Christ, want to kill Christ and remove his name and the faith about him from humanity, but they do not discover what they might do in relation to their wish because all the people who have believed in him prevent them, eager in his love and eager to hear his teaching and his word. And it is possible to see even now how those who profess to be priests of God and to know his Scriptures as scribes and suppose that they defend antiquity as if they were elders seek to abolish and kill Jesus and to abolish faith in the truth itself, doing everything, consequently, in accordance with the wish of their fathers. They do not, however, find what they might do, because they are not able to tear the people of Christ who hang on him away from him, nor can they erase him from their understanding.

And perhaps also all who do not think correctly about divinity but say something other about it than what is the teaching of Christ, wish to destroy Christ, but they cannot because the whole people of faith hang on him, listening to him. But also, all who look to the meaning of writings from without and, therefore, are said to be scribes in the moral sense, and all presbyters who are aliens from the teaching of Christ, that is philosophers of the Gentiles and the wise of other barbarians wish to kill Christ but are not able, overcome by the people of Christ who hang on and listen to his teaching.

⁵⁶ Ps 72:8.⁵⁷ Mt 12:30.⁵⁸ Ibid.⁵⁹ 1 Cor 5:4-5.⁶⁰ Lk 19:47-8.

15 'And Jesus answered again and said, speaking to them in parables: The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, who made a wedding feast for his son' and what follows.⁶¹

This parable also seems to suggest a simple meaning, namely that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be, in the moral sense, a man, a king, and the restoration of the bride, the church of Christ to Christ, its groom is said to be the wedding feast of the king's son. And the servants who are sent 'to call those invited to the wedding feast' are held to be the prophets at that time converting by their prophesies some of the people to the joy of the restoration of the church to Christ.⁶² But those who had been invited first did not wish 'to come'. They were those who were unwilling to hear the words of the prophets. Likewise, other servants were sent, that is, another company of prophets. And the 'meal' was prepared for which 'bulls' and 'fatted calves' of the king had been killed. These were the solid and rational food of the mysteries of God.⁶³ And so 'all things were prepared', that is, the words about all things that are necessary were prepared, which ('when that which is perfect shall come'⁶⁴) those who have acceded to the invitation of God will eat and drink. And because some of those called by the prophets merely disregarded what was said, occupied by their secular affairs, and did not treat the prophets maliciously, but others also treated them maliciously, therefore, wishing to show the difference between them, he said: 'Some, disregarding them, departed, one to his field, and another to his business; but the rest seized his servants, treated them violently, and killed them.'⁶⁵

But in addition, according to this simple explanation, the wrath of the king is understood of that which the apostle says on account of the Jews: 'Wrath is coming to them continuously to the end.'⁶⁶ War, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the killing of the people is prophesied against the Jews after the ascension of the Lord has taken place, in that which he says: 'He sent his army and killed those murderers and burned their city with fire.'⁶⁷

16 His words, "Then he said to his servants: The wedding feast is prepared, but those invited were not worthy; go, therefore, to the highways and invite whomever you shall find to the wedding feast,"⁶⁸ are referred to the apostles of Christ who say to the Jews: 'The Word of God was first sent to you, but because you judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.'⁶⁹ The highways of the Gentiles, therefore, are the world of the Gentiles outside the community of Israel, from which the apostles invited whomever they found 'to the wedding feast'. And they invited only the obedient, but they did not care whether, at some time before the invitation, those who were invited were bad or good, for they invited 'all' whom they were able to find. But it is proper to understand 'good' here simply as those more unpretentious and

⁶¹ Mt 22:1-2.

⁶² See Acts 3:21.

⁶³ See Heb 5:14.

⁶⁴ 1 Cor 13:10.

⁶⁵ Mt 22:5-6.

⁶⁶ 1 Thess 2:16.

⁶⁷ Mt 22:7.

⁶⁸ Mt 22:9.

⁶⁹ Acts 13:46.

conscientious among those who were coming to the worship of God to whom the apostolic saying applied: 'For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do naturally the things which are of the law, not having a law of this kind they are themselves a law to themselves, who demonstrate the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them.'⁷⁰ And 'the wedding feast' of Christ and the church 'is filled', and those restored to God, who were found by the apostles, recline to dine at the wedding feast.

But the fact that 'good and bad' had to be invited did not mean that the 'bad' might remain bad. They were to remove and put aside their garments that were inappropriate for a wedding feast and put on 'wedding garments', that is, 'compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience'⁷¹ (for these are the 'wedding garments'). The 'king', therefore, enters 'that he might see those reclining' before the meal that had been prepared was served them, 'the bulls and fatted calves and all things that had been prepared', so that seeing them, he might retain those having 'wedding garments' and entertain them, but might condemn the opposite. 'Entering', therefore, he found someone who had not changed his characteristic ways nor put on 'wedding garments, and he said to him: How did you get in here not having wedding garments?'⁷² And since he who had sinned and had not been renewed⁷³ nor had he put on the Lord Jesus, as he had no excuse, therefore, it said, 'he was silent'. And not only was he who had committed an outrage against the wedding feast cast out from the wedding feast, but further, he was bound by the servants of the king who were appointed over the bonds so that he could not walk, because he had not used his ability to walk for good and the apprehension of virtue. He was condemned to a place devoid of all light because he had completed no good work, a place more oppressive than all darkness, called 'the outer darkness'. But also if anyone of us comes to the wedding feast' of the king's son at the invitation of the king and shall not have put on the kind of 'wedding garments' we mentioned previously, he will suffer the same things and, bound 'hands and feet', be cast out 'into the outer darkness' where there will be 'weeping' in accordance with what is written: 'Woe to you who now laugh, because you will weep.'⁷⁴ And so that the Word might show the sadness and grief that will be in those who shall not have been clothed 'with wedding garments', he said, therefore, 'There will be weeping, and not only 'weeping', but also 'gnashing of teeth.'⁷⁵

17 These things, therefore, have been said concerning the simple interpretation. But let us go back and attempt to examine it in a more precise manner. The 'kingdom of heaven', therefore, 'is like' 'a man, a king' in relation to him who rules, but in relation to him who rules with the king, 'the son of a king', but in relation to those things which are in the kingdom of the king, it is compared to servants and those invited 'to a wedding feast' which some 'disregarded', not

⁷⁰ Rom 2:14–15.

⁷³ See Col 3:10.

⁷¹ Col 3:12.

⁷⁴ Lk 6:25.

⁷² Mt 22:12.

⁷⁵ Mt 22:13.

wanting to come because they were occupied with this age, but others 'committed outrages against the servants and killed them'. And further, of those who were ruled, there was also the army of the king and those, good and bad, who were gathered from 'the highways' until 'the wedding feast was filled' with those 'reclining at the wedding feast'. And there was the man among those reclining who did not have 'a wedding garment', and there were the servants who were ordered to send him bound 'hands and feet', 'into the outer darkness'.

It would be possible, indeed, to say: 'the kingdom of heaven is like a king' without the addition of the word man. But since 'man' is also added, it is necessary to explain this too. Someone before me has interpreted it in the same way it appears to me. For he wrote allegorical books about the sacred laws, and quotes statements where God is ascribed the passible nature of humans. First, he mentioned where God is transformed in relation to the passible nature of humans managing people according to the words, 'The Lord your God humoured you, as a father would humour his son.'⁷⁶ Then he cites where God is not as a man according to the words: 'Our God is not as a man.'⁷⁷

18 Now since we have a great abundance of examples from Gospel passages in which God the Father 'is likened to a man', we will explain the parables which refer to God as a man. And we will say to certain heretics who, not understanding what things are said in this mode in the old Scriptures, sin against the God of the law and the prophets and of the whole creation, since if God is likened to 'a man' (according to the parables of the Gospel) it is proper to take the wrath of God, the rage, repentance, turning away of his face, sitting, standing, walking of God, and sleeping, all of which are written of God in the prophets, in conformity with the logical sequence of those parables.

And their own declaration shows that they do not understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament. For if God possesses nothing that appears human, let them say whether that God who is said to be a man in the Gospel parables, and is represented as angered in agreement with human nature is himself the Father of Christ or there is some other besides him? And they are obliged either to say that some other is the Father of Christ besides this one whom the parables both call the Father of Christ and declare that he is like human nature, or if they say that this same one is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they are compelled to admit that many things are said to be like passable human nature in him, not because he himself is passable, but because he humours the passable nature of humans.

19 Therefore, inasmuch as we are humans and the riches 'of the goodness' of God⁷⁸ and the multitude of his mercies hidden in him⁷⁹ are not expedient for

⁷⁶ Dt 1:31. Origen is referring to Philo in this passage. See my discussion in fn. 123 in the translation of the Greek text.

⁷⁷ Num 23:19.

⁷⁸ See Rom 2:4.

⁷⁹ See Ps 30:20.

us (so that we not be harmed by seeing them), it is necessary that 'the kingdom of God' be 'like a man, a king', so that he might speak to men as a man with men, and manage men incapable of being managed by God, who is indeed God in every respect, both in that he speaks through the prophets and in that he manages men. And 'the kingdom of heaven' will cease being like 'a man' at that time when jealousy ceases, and contention, and the remaining passions and sins, and we have ceased to walk 'in a human way'⁸⁰ and have become worthy of hearing from God: 'I said, You are gods and all sons of the Most High'. Since we no longer do such things it is, therefore, said to us: 'But you will die like men.'⁸¹ And I think that not only will 'the kingdom of heaven' cease to be like 'a man, a king', but also many other things that man as sinner needs. For example, it says in Hosea, 'And I am like a panther to this Ephraim, and like a lion to the house of Judah', and in another passage: 'And I will meet them like an agitated bear'.⁸² At some time, then, he will cease to be as a panther, and as a lion, and an agitated bear, when humans stop doing such things and no longer have need of God as a panther, and as a lion, and an agitated bear, and when he does not have those who need him as such, then he will show himself 'just as he is'.⁸³ And I also understand in this way the words, 'Our God is a consuming fire',⁸⁴ since as long as there are things in us deserving to be consumed by fire, so long God 'is a fire consuming' those things. But when they shall have been consumed by the fire consuming those things which are customarily consumed by it, then no longer will 'our God' be 'a consuming fire', but only light, as John says, 'God is light', and 'God is love'.⁸⁵ And since we have pondered these things, see if you can understand the passage from the catholic epistle of John in this way which has, 'Beloved, we are now sons of God, but it does not yet appear what we will be. But we know that if he appears, we will be like him, since we will see him as he is'.⁸⁶ Now, indeed, even if we should be worthy of seeing God with our mind and heart, we see 'him' not 'as he is', but as he has become for us because of our dispensation. At the end of things, however, and 'of the restoration of all things, which is spoken of through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old',⁸⁷ we will see him not in the mode which he is not, but as will be fitting then, as he is.

20 And since we have once said this on that which says, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', we can also discover the reasons the Saviour often called himself 'son of man'. He was showing that just as God is said to be a man, as it were, when he is in charge of men in the parables, perhaps in the same way, the Saviour too, who exists as the Son of God from the beginning, and is 'God', and son 'of his love' and 'image of the invisible God', but does not remain in that which he is from the beginning. He becomes son of man⁸⁸ in relation to the

⁸⁰ See 1 Cor 3:3.⁸¹ Ps 81:6, 7.⁸² Hos 5:14; 13:8.⁸³ See 1 Jn 3:2.⁸⁴ Dt 4:24.⁸⁵ 1 Jn 1:5; 4:8, 16.⁸⁶ 1 Jn 3:2.⁸⁷ Acts 3:21.⁸⁸ See Jn 1:1; Col 1:13, 15; Phil 2:7.

dispensation (of that man who is said to be a man in the parables, but is God), in the likeness of man when he begins to be in charge of men, but Son of God who in the parables is said also to become man as it were. We ought not ask what man, so that we might say the Saviour is son of that man, but taking our stand on the understanding of God and of the parables which say he is a man, let us hear him intelligently when he says he is son of man. With us humans, therefore, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', but with those who are called gods according to the Scriptures, 'in' whose 'gathering God stands in the midst of the gods' discerning,⁸⁹ 'the kingdom of heaven' is like God, a king.

21 But you will ask if, as among humans who are inferior (so far as their nature is concerned), and angels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,⁹⁰ 'the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', in the same way among thrones 'the kingdom of heaven is like' a throne, 'a king', and among dominions it is like a dominion, 'a king', and among principalities it is like a principality, 'a king', and among powers it is like a power, 'a king'. For someone will ask, What is the reason for the distinction, that with the lowlier 'the kingdom of heaven' is compared 'to a man, a king', but it does not happen in the same way with the superior beings?

That man, therefore, who is compared to 'a man, a king', made 'a wedding feast for his son and set his servants to call those invited to the wedding feast'. Consider if, as in the physical details, the bride who marries is one and the servants who invite are others, and those who are invited 'to the wedding feast' are still others, so also in the hidden matters there are some who are received in the nature of the bride, and others in the order of servants dispatched 'to call those invited'; and third, besides these, those who are called 'to the wedding feast'. And God knows those different orders of souls and their virtues and the reasons these are received into the nature of the bride, and others into the order of servants serving the calling of this kind, and others into the number of those invited 'to the wedding feast'. And in spiritual marriages understand the reception of the Word to be the participation of the groom with the bride, that is of Christ with the soul, and the offspring to be the good works of the soul of the bride which is not corrupted by the Word, the groom, but daily by his incorruptible participation accompanies and begets the sort of rational descendants that are fitting from such marriages.

22 And understand the 'meal' which is prepared in such wedding feasts to be an oracle of God.⁹¹ The 'bulls' are understood as whatever is tough in the oracles of God, and 'the fatted calves' are those things that are pleasant and delightful. And understand the words, 'And all things have been prepared' to be the diverse variety and diversity in all the oracles of God. For the king, who exists in royal abundance makes a meal worthy of the kingdom and of his wealth.

⁸⁹ Ps 81:1.⁹⁰ See Col 1:16.⁹¹ See Rom 3:2.

I think that this was the first invitation 'to the wedding feast' of some noble souls and Israelites. For initially God wants those to come to that blessed feast who are to be understood as superior in mind. And it is possible to see for the most part that those who are of this kind do not want 'to come' to that calling and, therefore, other servants are sent out inviting those who do not want 'to come', and promising that if those invited come they will receive a meal prepared by the king, the flesh of bulls, which among clean animals is held to be cleaner than all the clean animals. They will also eat fatted calves, that is examples for each proposition that are various and replete with abundant rational proof and well apportioned, which is the moral meaning of slaughtered, examples offering full and abundant proof for each proposition. For example, (I say for the sake of argument) if someone should make some mediocre, weak remarks, lacking rational power against some proposition, will not what is set forth appear to you as words that are thin, meagre, lean, and (if I may speak in this way), dried up and skinny? But such are not what have been prepared in the banquet of the king of which he says: 'My bulls and fatted calves are killed, and all things are prepared'. For example, (I say for the sake of showing the meanings), some apostle speaks of purity in respect to a word. That word is rightly understood as a dove. But should one offer that same word of purity replete with much rational proof from the Scriptures so that it equally delights the soul of the hearer and confirms it, he has produced it fattened. If he shall have spoken from love, he has produced a pigeon. And in this way, understand what is thin and what is fattened in all the oracles of God.

23 But those who had been invited originally 'disregarded' the first inviters as if they were poor in their understanding and deficient in speech 'and went off' in pursuit of their own affairs and were more interested in those than in these which the king promised through the servants he sent. One of them, having his 'own field' did not come 'to the wedding feast', and another, conducting 'business', wishing to imitate in some way that pearl merchant seeking 'good pearls' who, when he had found a very precious pearl, sold all that he might buy the one. But that business was not good to which the man who had been invited went and did not attend the meal that had been prepared by the king. Those, therefore, who do not come to the calling from the intelligent invitations, but do not injure and kill the 'servants' sent to invite them are more moderate than those who dared such things, and some were completely at rest 'in their own field', but others 'in' their 'business'. But let us see who the remainder are besides those. I think that these are those who killed by the preparation of their contentious and shrewd words by which they detained, or appeared to have detained, the servants who were sent and were not prepared to answer their clever questions. These abused the servants of the calling. And it is possible to see every day how God's inviters, who are simple and not very 'clever

according to the flesh,⁹² who wish to teach those who are such with their divine wisdom, suffer insults from those who are intelligent but do not want to believe the truth. But others are also killed by those to whom the king said in his anger, 'Wrath will come upon them until the end'. And the king is angry and sends his 'army', either 'the multitude of the heavenly host' or those angels who have been appointed over punishments, and they kill 'the killers' of the servants of the Word, and set fire to 'their whole city'. I think it is the city of the impious regarding each doctrine, the congregation of those who convene in the wisdom 'of the princes of this age'.⁹³ The 'king' sets fire to this and destroys it, as if it consists of evil buildings. And if some time you should see the destruction either of some 'falsely named knowledge' or the effective destruction of words of whatever kind that profess to be true, do not hesitate to say that this has come about from the armies of God who regularly set fire to the cities of the enemies of God's truth. The city of Jewish teaching, therefore, was also set on fire after the advent of Christ. When this was done 'the king' spoke 'to his servants', that is, the apostles or the angels of God who had been appointed over the calling of the Gentiles, saying: 'The wedding feast is prepared, but those invited were not worthy; go, therefore, to the highways and call to the wedding feast as many as you shall find'. And it is possible to see those called 'to the wedding feast' from every road of doctrines, constructed either skilfully or unskilfully, which agreed with the customs of the Gentiles and of their cities, villages, and locales. 'And the servants going out', either the apostles of Christ from Judaea and Jerusalem, or the holy angels from the more profound boundaries where they were, and going 'to the diverse 'roads' of diverse customs, 'gathered' and will gather 'whomever' they shall find, the 'bad' ***⁹⁴, so that putting aside their evil (which is 'a garment' foreign to a wedding feast) and putting on good works (which are 'wedding garments') they might fill the nuptial banquet, 'reclining' and resting in the faith.

24 And when the 'wedding feast' was filled 'with those reclining' and resting in the faith and worship of God in this place, then the 'king' entered to see and judge the quality of those reclining, that he might accuse and condemn him who did not have 'a wedding garment', and serve up the prepared 'meal' for the rest. And 'he saw' one not having 'a wedding garment', one that is, because all are of one lineage who, after they have faith, continue to serve the evil which they had prior to their faith and do not put it aside. And he accused them as if they had done evil because they had dared to enter a wedding feast of this kind without receiving 'garments' worthy of 'the wedding feast', that is, a bright garment woven of virtues, of which Solomon also commands in Ecclesiastes saying, 'Let your garments be bright white at all times'.⁹⁵ But the man who had

⁹² See 1 Cor 1:26. ⁹³ See 1 Cor 2:6.

⁹⁴ Klostermann thinks some words are lacking here and that it should read: 'the bad and the good, so that the bad...'.
⁹⁵ Eccles 9:8.

dared enter a wedding feast of this kind without a proper garment 'was silent'. Consequently, he was condemned by him who said to his 'servants' (in addition to that 'army' which was mentioned above, of course), that 'they bind him hands and feet', which he had not used as he should have (for he had never run to the good nor had he completed any good deeds), and cast 'him' out, not only from the wedding banquet, but also throw him 'into outer darkness' bereft of all light, so that as he thirsts for light when he is in the outer darkness, he may wail to God who is able to be compassionate to him and snatch him from there, and he may gnash his teeth, which have become senseless because they have eaten bitter evil.⁹⁶ For his evil is understood as a bitter grape which does not forget 'the former things' nor strive for 'the things that are better', but remains in the same state when it ought to advance to maturity and exhibit a sweet edible bunch of grapes of some virtue.⁹⁷ And he adds: 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'⁹⁸ If anyone should consider the multitude of people who gather in the churches, and examine how many walk in a disciplined way and are reformed 'in newness of' their 'mind'; and how many walk carelessly, conformed 'to this age', he will see that the word of the Lord is true which says, 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'

25 'Then the Pharisees departed and took counsel that they might catch him in his speech. And they sent their disciples with the Herodians saying: Master, we know that you are true and that you teach the way of God in truth, and you have no concern for anyone, for you have no regard for a human person. Tell us, therefore, what do you think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?'⁹⁹

The intention of the present passage in its context seems to me to be as follows. The Jews, having their own way of life based on the law, different from the whole way of life of the Gentiles, and having the precept which says: 'Struggle for the truth to death, and the Lord will fight for you',¹⁰⁰ therefore spoke against the Gentiles who ruled them so that they not transgress the law of God. And they often radically risked dying under the Romans who wanted to bring a statue of Caesar into the temple of God, resisting and hindering those who had been made stronger than themselves because of their sins. And we find in Jewish history what the people risked under Pontius Pilate in the time of Tiberius Caesar when Pilate put pressure on them to accept a statue of Caesar in the temple, and when the Jews resisted beyond their strength; and it is written likewise to have happened in the time of Gaius Caesar.¹⁰¹ We think, therefore, that so long as God looked out for that people and the hedge of the protection of the Lord was placed around them as 'the vineyard of the Lord Sabbath', nothing like this touched them.¹⁰² It was Pilate himself, to whom they delivered Christ, who first dared defile the people. This was more serious than all the captivities, because every captivity (which they had frequently

⁹⁶ See Jer 38(31):29; Ez 18:2.

⁹⁷ See Phil 3:13.

⁹⁸ Mt 22:14.

⁹⁹ Mt 22:15-17.

¹⁰⁰ Sir 4:28.

¹⁰¹ See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18; *The Jewish War* 2.

¹⁰² See Is 5:2, 7.

suffered) was a physical hardship, but the bringing of a statue into the temple was the destruction of their souls.

In the time of Christ, therefore, when the Jews were ordered to give tribute to the Romans, there was deliberation and consultation among the Jews whether they, who were the people of God and his portion,¹⁰³ ought to give tribute to the rulers or rather undertake war for freedom if they were not permitted to live as they thought right. And history relates that Judas the Galilean, of whom Luke takes notice in the Acts of the Apostles,¹⁰⁴ pulled away a large multitude of Jews and taught them that they ought not pay tribute to Caesar or call Caesar lord. The one who was tetrarch at that time, however, was quick to persuade the people to think on their present situation and not on a whim undertake a war against those who were stronger, but to be content to pay the tribute.¹⁰⁵ The statement in the present Gospel text is, indeed, not obvious, but it indicates these same things, and the person who considers diligently the meaning of the present words will find this also in the present passage. For if it had been clear among them that one ought not to pay it, and if there had been an agreement of their wills that they ought not to pay tribute, the 'Pharisees', who wanted to catch Christ 'in his speech', would not have had a reason when they sent 'their disciples with the Herodians' to question him whether 'it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not'.

26 And consider if that history is not made clear from the fact that when the Pharisees wish to catch Christ 'in speech' they sent not only 'their disciples' to question him about the tribute but they sent them 'with the Herodians'. For perhaps among the people at that time those who thought it necessary to pay the tribute were called Herodians by those who objected to doing it, who with a view to freedom advised against paying the tribute. The Pharisees appeared to be observing the minuteness of the Jewish disciplines very carefully, so that if Christ should respond that it is not necessary to pay tribute to Caesar the Herodians might deliver him to the Romans, as the author of sedition. If, on the other hand, he should order that it be paid, the 'Pharisees' would accuse him of having regard 'for the person of men' rather than teaching 'the way of God in truth'. Now consider and notice that when the disciples of the Pharisees say: 'Master, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in truth, and you have no concern for anyone, for you have no regard for a human person', they were challenging him by praise of this kind to disregard the person of the Herodians who defended Caesar's portions, so that, responding in accord with the wish of the Pharisees that it is not lawful to pay tribute 'to Caesar', they might hand him over to the Herodians. Wherefore, the Lord, 'seeing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a denarius. And Jesus said to them: Whose

¹⁰³ See Dt 32:9.

¹⁰⁴ See Acts 5:37.

¹⁰⁵ See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.1.

image and superscription is this? They say to him, Caesar's. Then he says to them: Give back to Caesar, therefore, the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.¹⁰⁶

We learn from this passage by the example of the Saviour that we should not have regard for these things which are said by many, on the pretext of piety, and, for this reason, appear glorious, but for these things which are said consistently in relation to the order of reason. For when it was asked of him whether it is lawful to pay 'tribute to Caesar or not', he did not simply give an answer in accord with what seemed right to him, but he said: 'Show me a coin of the tribute', and he asked: 'Whose image and inscription is it?' And when they said, 'Caesar's', he answered that it is necessary to give back 'to Caesar the things which are Caesar's' and one must not defraud him of his own things on the pretext of piety. For someone is not prevented from giving back 'to God the things which are God's' because he gives back 'to Caesar the things that are Caesar's'.

27 Someone can understand this passage morally in this way. We all consist of soul and body (we defer now to say that we consist also of spirit), and we ought to give certain things as if it were tribute to the ruler of the body who is called 'Caesar', that is the necessary things of the body which have the physical image of the ruler of bodies. This is food, clothing, sleep, and whatever things are necessary for the simple relaxation of the physical nature, without which physical nature cannot exist. Likewise, since we are soul, so far as its nature is concerned it is in the image of God, its king. We ought to offer to God whatever things are appropriate to the nature of souls, that is, all ways which lead to virtue and all actions which are in accord with virtue. Those, therefore, who teach the law of God beyond the ordinary and command to have no concern about physical things and the needs of the body are the Pharisees who advised against giving 'tribute' back 'to Caesar', that is, who advise that it is necessary for total virtue to afflict the body in every respect with fasts and vigils, and abstain from all things that are physical and necessary to the body so that we pay nothing as tribute to the ruler of the body. Such are those of whom the apostle says: 'In the last times some will withdraw from the faith, paying attention to spirits of error and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences cauterized, forbidding to marry and ordering to abstain from food, which things God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful'.¹⁰⁷ There are others, however, who think it necessary to indulge bodies beyond the ordinary and to satisfy the ruler of bodies in all ways. These are in the likeness 'of the Herodians' who say one ought to pay tribute 'to Caesar'. But our Saviour, 'the Word of God',¹⁰⁸ distinctly separating the rational debts of the body from the spiritual debts of the soul, says: 'Give back to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and the things which are God's to God', for every

¹⁰⁶ Mt 22:17-21.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Tim 4:1-3.

¹⁰⁸ See Heb 4:12.

physical thing bears the image of Caesar, and every virtue bears the image of God. If, therefore, we thus give back to the ruler of the flesh the things which are of the flesh, so that we may not defraud God of his spiritual virtues, then we are giving back to the ruler of bodies the things which are of the body, that is those things alone of which the nature of the flesh has need and nothing more which pertains to the diminution of virtues. And if we serve the virtues in such a way that the nature of the flesh is not burdened by their necessities, then we are giving back 'to God the things which are God's', so that virtue is not diminished while we serve the flesh beyond measure, nor is the nature of the flesh burdened, while we adhere more abundantly to virtues.

28 I also know another explanation of this passage that has been handed down: Caesar is called the ruler of the world in the moral sense, just as the rulers of all the nations are represented in the person of the ruler of the world. God, however, is the king of all the ages; he is God not in one mystery, but everywhere. Since, therefore, we have certain things in us which belong to the ruler of this world, that is various evils, and we are not able first to give back 'to God the things which are God's' if we shall not have given back to the ruler the things which are the ruler's, that is, if we shall not have put aside all evil. Therefore, the Lord responds when the coin and its image has been shown to him: 'Give back to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are God's'. And we learn from this present passage that if we are ever tempted by those 'who want a pretext' and who set certain themes before us, not that they might learn, but that they might find a basis for accusation against us, we ought by no means be silent nor answer in a simple manner, but with thought and circumspection, so that (so far as we are able) we may cut off 'the pretext of those seeking a pretext'¹⁰⁹ in us and we may teach blamelessly those things that can save the hearers who wish to be saved.

29 'In that day Sadducees came to him who say there is no resurrection, and they asked him, saying: Master, Moses said, If someone shall have died not having a son' and what follows.¹¹⁰

In what 'day'? 'In that day', undoubtedly, when 'the Pharisees went and took counsel against him that they might catch him in his speech', and they questioned him about the tax. For perhaps, when the Lord answered: 'Give back, therefore, the things which are Caesar's to Caesar and the things which are God's to God',¹¹¹ and all were admiring his response, when 'the Sadducees' saw his intelligent answers, they thought to show that they possessed more learned remarks since they say, 'there is no resurrection'.

For 'the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection', not only denied this which is customarily called the resurrection of the flesh by the simple, but they also did not acknowledge the immortality of the soul at all. Even now the

¹⁰⁹ See 2 Cor 11:12.

¹¹⁰ Mt 22:23-4.

¹¹¹ Mt 22:21.

Samaritans resemble them; and indeed, even in the time of the apostles some of the Corinthians held similar views, denying the life of the soul after death, of whom the apostle writes: 'If Christ is preached that he arose from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?'¹¹² and the other words which follow about the same argument. And the fact that the Corinthians denied the continuation of the soul in accord with the view point of the Sadducees is shown by these words of the apostle: 'If in this life only we hope in Christ, we are more miserable than all people.'¹¹³ For although someone may not believe in the resurrection of the flesh, nevertheless one who thinks the soul is immortal hopes in Christ not only 'in this life'; but that person 'hopes in Christ in this life only' who does not believe that the soul will be victorious after death.

30 Since, therefore, the 'Sadducees' produced an example from the Mosaic law in defence of their error, it seems worthwhile to me to cite the same text of the law which the 'Sadducees' produced which reads like this in Deuteronomy: 'If brothers dwell together and one of them shall die and have no offspring, the wife of the dead man shall not be without for a man who is not close; the brother of her husband shall go in to her and take her to himself as a wife, and shall live with her. And whatever child shall be born shall be established with the name of his dead brother, and his name shall not be blotted out from Israel. But if the man is not willing to take the wife of his brother, the wife of his brother shall go up to the gate to the elders and shall say: The brother of my husband is not willing to raise up the name of his brother in Israel. And the elders of that city shall summon him and speak to him, and if he shall say as he stands: I am not willing to take her, the wife of his brother shall approach him in the sight of the elders and shall remove his sandal from his foot and spit in his face, and answer and say: So shall they do to the man who does not build up the house of his brother; and they shall call his name in Israel, the house of the man whose sandal was removed.'¹¹⁴ The 'Sadducees' reading these words and understanding nothing worthy of God in them thought that because of these words it was not possible that the dead arise, so that a man would again be a man with masculine members, and a woman would be a woman with feminine members. And when the Lord answered them he did not expound the intention of the words of the law, as if he were answering those unworthy of knowledge of so great a mystery. He spoke about the future resurrection only on the simple level to those who even now invoke this passage from the divine Scriptures, and said that in that place they will not be married, but those who shall have arisen will be 'as the angels in heaven', and that the bodies of their 'lowliness' will be transformed in accordance with the heavenly and luminous bodies of the angels.

¹¹² 1 Cor 15:12.¹¹³ 1 Cor 15:19.¹¹⁴ Dt 25:5-10.

31 Since we have first quoted the words themselves of the law, I have not thought it superfluous that we explain their meaning to some extent. I ask, therefore, who this one woman is and who the two brothers are, the first of which had a wife and did not leave fruit from her, and the other, the brother of the dead man, who took her and begat in the name of his brother, and who that one is who was not willing 'to take his brother's wife' and, for this reason, the woman removed one of his sandals 'before the elders' and spit in his face, going up 'to the gate' and saying: 'The brother of my husband is not willing to raise up the name of his brother in Israel'; and who are the elders and what is the gate to which that 'woman' goes up.¹¹⁵

There are two brothers, therefore, the first is the word of the law and the second the word of the Gospel. One mother, wisdom, has brought them both forth, and one house has always held them, that is, the same Scripture of the Old Testament, and they have always dwelt 'together'. But at the advent of Christ the former brother died, that is, the teaching of the law, because, he was emptied by the New Testament and became void. And the wife of that teaching is every soul or synagogue which previously was under the law. The soul of Paul or Peter was such, and of the rest of that people. And every upright soul which was a lover of that teaching and wishes always to preserve its memory and name in itself so that she never cease being called its wife, is not made wife of another 'outside', that is, a foreign and strange teaching which is not near (and every Gentile teaching which is far removed from the offspring of the law of God is foreign and strange), but she receives the teaching of the Gospel as her husband, which is the brother of her deceased husband and near in respect to the divine offspring, that she might produce sons from him because she was not able to produce any son from the former teaching, because no one is justified 'from works of the law'.¹¹⁶ But the sons of the wife of the second husband are his holy works, and the wife herself preserves the commandment of the law.

And I think that every soul in its beginnings first accepted the teaching of the law in its simple narrative, which doubtlessly dies when that soul has begun to advance to greater things. And thus, when the simple teaching has died it is joined to the more spiritual teaching which is in keeping with the higher mysteries in the Scriptures. But the soul which was formerly under the law, which does not preserve the commandment of the law, becomes, after the death of the law, a wife 'outside' 'to a man who is not near' when she takes up a teaching which is not at all near to the prior law, nor is it in accord with its meaning, but is a total stranger. Such are all the souls of the heretics for whom the word of the ancient law is dead. They do not wish, however, to marry the spiritual teaching which has always dwelt 'together' with the ancient law in one and the same house of the same Scripture, but they have married another strange teaching which is alienated from the New as from the Old Testament and is

¹¹⁵ See Dt 25:7, 9.

¹¹⁶ See Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16.

never near them. But when an upright soul (after the law is dead to it as we said) accepts the teaching of the Gospel over itself, the brother of the deceased law, then the brother of the dead, that is the teaching of the new law, 'goes in' to that soul and is within it and takes 'that woman to himself' and dwells with that soul in all his blessedness and produces fruit from it. 'And whatever child shall be born' to her, that is whatever good work shall be done by her is produced 'in the name' of the 'dead' brother, and although it is not born from the law, nevertheless it carries the name of the former law, and that work is said to be the offspring of the law of God, and the name of the law of God is celebrated in that good work because that law also is called the law of God, and the 'name' of that law ought not be blotted out from all the works of a holy soul, even though the law itself has been emptied.

32 And these words follow: 'And if the man is unwilling to take the wife of his brother, the wife of his brother shall go up to the gate, to the elders and say' what has been written to be said. And observe first, inasmuch as the woman was doing what was commanded her in the law, and the man going in to her would dwell with her and produce offspring from her, he was not said to be a man, but 'the brother' of the deceased. When he does not want 'to take his brother's wife', however, nor 'does he want to raise up the name of his brother in Israel', and when summoned by the elders 'of the city', 'he said: I do not want to take her', then he is no longer said to be a brother, but a man.¹¹⁷ For example, as long as someone does the command of the law, Scripture says to him: 'I said: You are gods and all sons of the Most High'. But if he disregards the law, it is said to him: 'But you shall die as men'.¹¹⁸ And every heretical teaching is the one who is near who does not want to take the wife of his brother, because after the death of the law some other explanation of the law occurred which was erroneous and neither spiritual nor true. Although this was perverted, nevertheless it produced offspring from the law because it takes its origin from the pretexts of those things which are said in the law and, therefore, is said to be a 'man' who is near who is not willing to 'raise up the name of his brother' and to honour the name of the law. And since this teaching is perverse, it does not want to take the wife of its brother, the upright soul, to bear fruit and revive the name of the law. For this reason, that woman who was prepared to honour her former husband does not stand below, but goes up 'to the gate', of which it is written, 'This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter it',¹¹⁹ and to the elders of that city, that is, to the presbyters of the church of God. And the woman will refute that perverse teaching which does not want to bear fruit in accordance with the law of God, and will say: 'The brother of my husband does not want to raise up the name of his brother in Israel'.¹²⁰ For one who teaches things contrary to the law does not want to raise up the seed of the law. Thus 'the

¹¹⁷ See Dt 25:7-9.¹¹⁸ Ps 81:6-7.¹¹⁹ Ps 117:20.¹²⁰ Dt 25:7.

elders' of that 'city' ask a man like this if he is truly unwilling, for when the priests discuss the words of some teaching, it is as if they interrogate it, and when they discover a teaching that professes things contrary to the law, that teaching appears to give an answer to the elders and to say that I am not willing to take her who belonged to the law. When, therefore, that teaching shall have answered that it is not willing, the holy soul approaches it and, in the presence of the elders, rebukes it, takes off one of its sandals, and disgraces it. And give attention to these words because elsewhere it is written to Moses: 'Loose the sandals of your feet', and again, in the Gospel it says: 'Of whom I am not worthy to loose the sandals of his feet',¹²¹ if perhaps to loose the sandal and to take it off are not the same. For Moses was not ordered to take his sandals off but to loose them, nor did John, speaking of the Saviour, speak of taking the sandals off. But that one who acts contrary to the law has his sandal taken off. For every teaching, since it is born from a pretext of the truth of the Scriptures, generally says what is true in some portion, but in another, what is false. In what part, therefore, it speaks falsely, in that part it is accused and refuted by the holy soul; its sandals are taken off in a fashion consistent with its error by which it had been furnished with sandals. Every heretical teaching, therefore, has neither had its sandals removed completely, nor has it been completely provided with sandals. For this reason, that woman spit 'in his face' before the elders, and renounced him; for every soul is seen to spit 'in the face' of an erroneous doctrine because it renounces and rejects it. And indeed, if the soul shall not have renounced every perverse doctrine, it cannot be steadfastly married to the word of truth. And 'she answers and says: So shall they do to the man who does not build up the house of his brother.'¹²² Everyone, therefore, who sees this man to have had his sandal removed by the woman and spit on and to hear her saying: 'So shall they do to every man who does not built up the house of his brother', ought to do 'all things for the building up' of his brother. And if he shall not have built up 'the house of his brother', the law, 'one sandal' shall be taken off likewise, and he will be spit on and 'his name will be called in Israel' by all who see him, 'the house of him who had his sandal removed'.¹²³

But since the teaching of the Mosaic law was the former husband of the soul, and the teaching of the Gospel the second, every upright soul is married to the latter since the law has died. That is the lesson that the apostle teaches as follows: 'Or are you ignorant, brothers, for I am speaking to those who know the law, that the law dominates a man for as long as he lives? But if the husband shall have died, she is released from the law of the husband, therefore, she is an adulteress if she shall be with another man while the husband is living. But if the husband shall have died, she is free from the law of the husband, so that she would not be an adulteress if she should be with another man.'¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ex 3:5; Lk 3:16.

¹²² Dt 25:9.

¹²³ See Dt 25:9; 1 Cor 14:26; Dt 25:10.

¹²⁴ Rom 7:1-3.

33 We have said these things in a digression to clarify the law of Moses which the 'Sadducees' mentioned when they interrogated Christ, 'saying, Moses said' and the words which follow. They supposed that all future things in the beyond are as they are in this age: husbands and wives, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters. For the Sadducees should have considered at that time those things which follow from their opinion—if there are marriages and childbirth—if there is childbirth, there are also deaths and infirmities, if there is birth, there is also childhood and progressions from childhood to full-grown maturity, and the diminution of old age. And if there are all these things, there will also be evil, and scarcely will virtue be found anywhere in people here and there who seek it. And what can be more foolish than these ideas? It is better 'that there be no resurrection'¹²⁵ than that it be such as the 'Sadducees' suppose. And if there is a father or brother or something of this kind there, nevertheless it is not like physical birth through a woman or through the shameful parts of the body.

But in my opinion there are not only brothers, fathers, and sons there in accordance with the impassable spirit, but also wife and husband in the unity of spirit, in accord with that parable which says: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, who made a wedding feast for his son' and the words that follow.¹²⁶ The son of the king 'in the resurrection' of the dead, therefore, will make a wedding feast that exceeds all wedding feasts which the eye has seen and the ear has heard and 'has ascended upon the human heart'.¹²⁷ And that wedding feast will be pure, divine, and spiritual, found in words that defy human reason, which human beings are not permitted to speak.¹²⁸ And you will ask if 'in the resurrection' there can also be marriages of others beside the marriage of Christ, or rather Christ alone as bridegroom will destroy all marriages and will form marriages so that two are in one flesh and, to a greater degree, not only two in one flesh, but two as one spirit, that is, bridegroom and bride. But see that when you hear these things you not err and accept the fables of some who say there are male and female ages, which they have invented along with the conjugal connections of those ages. These do not exist, nor is there any mention of them in the holy Scriptures.

34 Now let us see Christ's answers in which he says: 'You err, knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. In the resurrection, they neither marry nor do they receive wives, but they are as the angels in heaven'.¹²⁹ The question is this: The Saviour, who says to the Sadducees, 'You err knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God', indicates that in some Scriptures it is asserted that 'in the resurrections' there are no marriages, to men, of course, made in the likeness of the angels. What Scripture is it, then, which teaches that 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor receive wives'? And in what writing of the

¹²⁵ See Mt 22:23.

¹²⁶ Mt 22:2.

¹²⁷ See 1 Cor 2:9.

¹²⁸ See 2 Cor 12:4.

¹²⁹ Mt 22:29–30.

law or the prophets do we learn that those who have arisen will be 'like the angels in heaven'? For obviously this writing is not found in the Old Testament. And one who wishes may investigate if it is possible to find it. We say, however, that it is, in fact, not written in words which say those things clearly, but words which indicate them in a mystery with respect to the moral understanding. For since the 'law' is a shadow 'of future good things'¹³⁰ and says certain things about husbands and wives and sets forth just marriages, it is not understood in the first instance about marriages themselves, which we suppose simply to be marriages according to the flesh, but about such marriages as we presented them above to be of Christ and the church in that age. For example: 'Abraham had two sons, one from the handmaid and the other from the free woman; and he who was from the handmaid was born according to the flesh, but he who was born from the free woman was born according to promise.'¹³¹ It is not at all necessary that I take up a position on the understanding of the physical marriages of the free woman and the handmaid, but these things signify some things from other things. And again: 'For this reason a man shall leave father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.'¹³² We ought not thus think that what is said is said as if nothing mysterious is shown in these words, because 'that is a great mystery' of Christ and the church.¹³³ And there are a thousand other passages written about marriages, and each passage contains a pure and divine understanding of marriage in relation to the moral exposition. Whoever, therefore, reads the Scriptures about the marriages of men and women and thinks nothing more is shown in them than simple marriages, errs, knowing neither 'the Scriptures nor the power of God'; just as the Sadducees erred when they read about marriages in the Scriptures and understood them physically.

35 Someone may ask whether this which he says to the Sadducees, 'You err not knowing the Scriptures', indicates that they err in this, that they did not read the Scriptures outside the books of Moses, or that they did not understand the books of Moses themselves when they read them. And another will say that he rebuked them for erring in that they did not read the other 'Scriptures' which are outside the law, that is the secret books, and therefore they erred, not knowing the Scriptures. And someone else will say, it is sufficient to censure the error of the Sadducees that they did not know the 'Scriptures' of the Mosaic law because they did not search for their divine meaning. Notwithstanding, he says the Sadducees do not know two things: one indeed, 'the Scriptures', and the other 'the power of God' through which the resurrection occurs and the new life in it. And someone can say that when the Lord declares that the Sadducees do not know 'the power of God', he is declaring that they do not know himself, for he is the power and wisdom of God,¹³⁴ and the Sadducees did not

¹³⁰ Heb 10:1.¹³¹ Gal 4:22-3.¹³² Gn 2:24.¹³³ Eph 5:32.¹³⁴ 1 Cor 1:24.

know him as they did 'not know the Scriptures' which spoke of him. For this reason, they did not believe in the future resurrection of their saints. But the one who is not willing to understand this saying so that the Sadducees appear to be reproached because they did not understand 'the Scriptures' about a certain marriage stated in the moral sense, in a spiritual explanation but simply in relation to a physical story, must do one of two things: either not believe the present words of Christ, as if Christ spoke incorrectly, who said what was not stated was stated in the Scriptures, or take refuge in secret books in which there appears to be a clearer description of that blessed life. And he will say about those Scriptures what the Lord says to the Sadducees here: 'You err not knowing the Scriptures'. And see if whoever rejects the moral understanding of the Scriptures does not fall into impossibilities on every side. This is why it does not seem possible to me that the words, 'You err not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God', can be explained in any other way than that someone who hears the Scriptures morally shall understand one thing from other things,¹³⁵ which show in what ways the Scriptures say something about husbands and wives. And as those err who, not understanding the prophetic Scriptures morally, think that after the resurrection human beings will eat and drink material foods and drink because the prophetic Scriptures also contain certain things like this, so also, understanding literally the things written about the marriages of men and women, they think that even after death we will need physical marriages on account of which even in this world one is not able to be free for prayers without blemish.

36 Likewise I ask what he means when he says, 'You err knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God'. Does this refer only to the statement, 'In the resurrection they neither marry nor receive wives' or, because he says, 'But they will be like the angels in heaven', does it refer also to this? I do not find a Scripture anywhere which says that the saints after death will be 'like the angels of God', unless perhaps one also understands this statement morally in relation to the statement: 'But you will go to your fathers in peace, sustained in a good old age', and likewise: 'He was added to his people', or, 'He was added to his kindred'.¹³⁶ It remains that we should say something about his words, 'Have you not read of the resurrection, what was said to you by God: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead, but God of the living'.¹³⁷ And here we say that although he could have offered a thousand examples showing the future resurrection, he did not do this from the prophets, but only from the law, because the Sadducees read only the Mosaic law. Wishing to appease them he produced his example from there.

¹³⁵ This expression, *aliam ex aliis*, is the translator's way of rendering the Greek *allegoria*, which appears in the Greek text.

¹³⁶ Gn 15:15; 25:8; 35:29.

¹³⁷ Mt 22:31-2.

For it is impossible that the God who himself says, 'I am who I am,' and 'This is my name forever,' be said to be God of those who are not.¹³⁸ And if this is impossible, then he is 'the God' of those who are and 'who live,' and exist, and perceive his kindness. And notice that he did not say, 'I am the God of Abraham,' Isaac, and Jacob, but: 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' and in another passage he said: 'Go and say to Pharaoh: The God of the Hebrews sent me.'¹³⁹ For those who are most perfect around God (I mean so far as a comparison with other human beings goes) have the whole God more fully in themselves, for which reason he is said, not in common, but individually, to be their God. For example, if it should be said: That field is theirs, we indicate that each of those who possess that field has a small part of it and they do not have it in its entirety; but if we say: That field is that person's, we show that that person possesses that whole field. So too, where it is said, 'the God of the Hebrews,' their imperfection is shown, since each of them has some small portion of God. But Abraham had the whole God, and Isaac had the whole God, and Jacob had the whole God. Therefore, it is not said in common, their God, but: 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' as if each of them had the whole God. So also, it is said elsewhere: 'the God of Elijah.'¹⁴⁰ But he is both God and Father of Christ. He also gave this benefit individually to his disciples, that he be not only their God, but also their Father, as he says to Mary after his resurrection: 'Go to my brothers and say to them: I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.'¹⁴¹ And Luke adds this besides, saying: 'He is not God of the dead, but of the living; for they all live to him,'¹⁴² which looks back to no small praise of the patriarchs, who were not only living, but were living to God¹⁴³ because they were living to no other in addition. Consequently, let us live to no other except to God in Christ.

¹³⁸ Ex 3:14, 15.¹³⁹ Ex 3:6; 7:16.¹⁴⁰ 4 (2) Kgs 2:14.¹⁴¹ Jn 20:17.¹⁴² Lk 20:38.¹⁴³ See Gal 2:19.

PART II

The *Series Commentariorum* (On Matthew 22:34–27:66)

Series 1–8 (Matthew 22:34–46)

1 'But the Pharisees, hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered, and one of them asked, to tempt him, Master, what is the greatest commandment in the law? And he said to him: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.'¹

When the Lord used an example from the law in reply to the question of the Sadducees and demonstrated that there is a resurrection to those willing to listen, Matthew said consequently, that Jesus 'silenced the Sadducees,' because he wished to show that the brightness of the truth silences the bitter and noxious voice of the lie. Therefore, just as the Saviour 'silenced the Sadducees' by the word of his teaching and confidently refuted false doctrine (which they considered to be the truth), so the imitators of Christ also do using the examples in the Scriptures with which, in accordance with 'sound teaching,' one must silence every boasting voice of the Pharisee who declares, 'The rivers are mine and I made them,' as it is written in Ezekiel.² The Sadducees, therefore, 'who say there is no resurrection,' asked the Saviour those questions that are recorded, thinking to silence him.³ But neither Jesus nor his beloved disciples are ever impeded by the ungodly. For it is appropriate that the Sadducees be 'silenced' by Christ. For a just person is silent, knowing that there is 'a time for being silent and a time for speaking,' but he does not become silent.⁴ And just as it is appropriate for a just person to be silent but not to become silent, so it is appropriate for Sadducees, or, if you will, all who are teachers of a lie, to become silent, but not to be silent; for even if they become silent so far as the subject is concerned, they are, indeed, not silent. Therefore, the Lord did not say to a human being, but to the sea, 'Be quiet and become silent,' rebuking it when it was turbulent.⁵

Nevertheless, 'when the Pharisees,' who agree that there is a resurrection, 'hear that he silenced the Sadducees, they gather.' The doctrine of the resurrection

¹ Mt 22:34–40. There is no preserved Greek manuscript tradition for the *Commentary* from this point to the end.

² See Tit 1:9; Ez 29:3, 9.

³ See Mt 22:23–8.

⁴ Prv 3:7.

⁵ Mk 4:39.

was obviously an important point, and those who did not gather so long as the Sadducees were not silenced, gathered. Nonetheless, even if they had gathered because the proof of the resurrection grasped them, still 'one of them asked', not as if he wanted to learn the answer to his question, but 'to tempt' our Lord. Therefore, we ought to consider every person who asks any teacher about a small point of any kind, not to learn but to tempt, and not from a simple disposition, to be the brother of that Pharisee who tempted the Saviour with his question. For Christ takes all things upon himself that come upon his saints, whether from the insidious or the scrupulous; for we ought to treat those things that have not been written in accordance with those that have been. For it is written that he said he 'was hungry' and 'thirsty' because of those hungering and thirsting; and because of the naked, and strangers, and sick, and those put in prison, he said, 'I was naked', and, 'I was a stranger', and, 'I was in prison', and, 'I was sick'.⁶ Let us add ourselves in the natural sequence of the similitude: I suffered injury, I am blind, and tempted, and all the other things. And just as the word of the Lord is true in those stories that have been written when he says, 'As often as you did it to one of these least, you did it to me', so when a just person shall have suffered injury or blasphemy or any such thing, assume Christ saying to the perpetrators, insofar as 'you did it to one of these least',⁷ you did the injury to me, you tempted me, you blasphemed against me.

2 Let us now consider the statement of the question of the one tempting him. 'Master', he says, 'what is the greatest commandment in the law?' He said 'Master' tempting him, because he did not ask this question as a disciple of Christ. And this will be clear from the example that we will mention. Consider: a father is the father of his son, and no one can properly address him as father except his son, and a mother is mother of her daughter, and only her daughter can address her as mother. In the same way, a master is the master of his disciple, and the disciple is disciple of his master. For this reason, no one can correctly address him as 'master' except the disciple. And consider if it is not because of this that not all who call him master speak correctly, but only these who have the desire to learn from him. He said to his disciples, 'You call me master and Lord, and you speak correctly, for so I am'.⁸ The disciples of Christ, therefore, correctly call him master, and those who are servants of his word correctly call him Lord, whence the apostle said correctly, 'But for us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him'.⁹ Consider also his saying, 'It is sufficient for a disciple that he become' not simply as a master, but 'as his master'.¹⁰ If someone, therefore, does not learn anything from his word or submit his complete soul to him that he might become his esteemed planting,¹¹ yet calls him 'Master', he is a brother of the Pharisee who tempts Christ and calls him 'Master'. So too, everyone who says, 'Our

⁶ Mt 25:35-6.⁹ 1 Cor 8:6.⁷ Mt 25:40.¹⁰ Mt 10:25.⁸ Jn 13:13.¹¹ See Jer 2:21.

Father who art in heaven, ought not have 'a spirit of servitude in fear, but a spirit of the adoption of sons'.¹² But the person who does not have 'a spirit of the adoption of sons', and says, 'Our Father who art in heaven,' lies when he calls God his Father since he is not a son of God.

The question itself, however, is as follows: 'What is the greatest commandment in the law?' It is worthwhile to offer some explanation about the diversity of the commandments in relation to this question. Some commandments are great, and others are secondary. Consequently, one must seek to know the commandments in order down to the least. For if he had not responded to the Pharisee tempting him and asking, 'What is the greatest commandment in the law?' we would have concluded, consequently, that one commandment is not greater than another. But now, when he responds and says, 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and your whole soul, and your whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment,' we learn the appropriate sentiment concerning the commandments, that there is a 'greatest' one and there are lesser ones down to the least. And notice this in addition, that a certain Pharisee asked, 'What is the greatest commandment in the law,' but when the Lord answers him he teaches us that not only is loving God 'the greatest commandment,' but it is also the 'first,' and first, not in the order of the Scriptures, but in the merit of the virtue. And we must note also that this is harmonious, as it were, with this passage, because although numerous commandments have been appointed, as it were, even so now he said that this commandment is 'greatest and first': 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,' and 'the second is like' the former, and is 'great' because of its likeness, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. As we understand this commandment to be second, there is another that would be third in greatness and order, and another fourth, and enumerating the commands of the law in this way in order, someone who is a recipient of God's wisdom might set them in order down to the least. This task belongs to no other than Christ alone, who is 'the power of God and the wisdom of God'.¹³ From the time of Moses, therefore, down to the advent of the Saviour, whenever the law was read, perhaps the question was asked, 'What is the greatest commandment' in it? For the Pharisee would not have asked this had he not investigated this question for a long time with those, and not found the answer until Jesus came and taught not only what is 'the greatest,' but also 'the first,' and that the 'second is like' the former. It is his own task, therefore, to discover also the third, the fourth, and the rest.¹⁴ But you will investigate if there is some commandment that does not have both, that is that it is 'first' and 'greatest,' but is one of these. And I think the apostle says something like this to the

¹² Rom 8:15.

¹³ See 1 Cor 1:24.

¹⁴ Greek fragment: When, therefore, he was asked about the first, he introduced also the second, lacking nothing from the first. And if there is a first commandment, and another is second, there might be also a third, and a fourth, and so on.

Ephesians: 'Honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it might be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'¹⁵ 'Honour your father and mother', therefore, is indeed 'first', but not also 'great'. And you will seek if there is something 'great', but not also 'first' in the varying greatness of the commandments. And because others are least in the comparison of commandments, it is useful to offer what the Lord himself said as an example: 'If anyone breaks one of these least commandments, and teaches others so, he will be called least in the kingdom of God.'¹⁶ And the Saviour indeed hands down what would be 'the greatest and first commandment' to the question of the Pharisee who tempts him, but he adds also a second 'like' to the former, which was, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', and he adds, 'All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments'. And the apostle says to the Romans, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, and if there is some other commandment, it is summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.¹⁷

Let us see, therefore, whether it is one thing for all the law and prophets to depend 'on these two commandments' about the love of God and neighbour, but another for every commandment to be summed up in this commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'; or are all the commandments both dependent on and summed up in each commandment. Someone, therefore, will say that commandments depend on commandments, and that the second depends on the first indeed and greatest, and like the first, the third on the second, and in this manner, all the commandments thereafter, which are after the second depend on the preceding ones. Now the apostle said in his reflection on the matter that every commandment depends on the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', but the Saviour taught that these two commandments have supremacy over all the commandments. Another, however, discussing the question will seek in what way it is said, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not steal, and if there is any other commandment in the law, it is summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. He will say that this commandment too, 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and your whole soul and your whole mind' is summed up in that commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. But how might it be true that his assertion, 'And if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word', unless the commandment that has been stated about the love of God also is summed up in the one that is second and like the former? And if the first commandment is summed up in the second, the second must be greater than the former. Every commandment, therefore, is summed up, including that 'first and greatest', in this second commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', because if we do anything because we love ourselves,

¹⁵ Eph 6:2-3.¹⁶ Mt 5:19.¹⁷ Rom 13:9.

we also love God himself who becomes the author of our love, so that we may love one another and be loved by one another. For by giving thanks in the neighbour that we are rational and called to the knowledge of God and expect his blessings and grace, we are summing up the love of God in the commandment that is second and like the former.

Therefore, 'The greatest and first commandment' in the law is this: 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind'. But one who takes away anything from that total commandment, that is whether from the words 'with the whole heart', or 'with the whole soul', or 'with the whole mind', takes away from its greatness and its preeminence. And perhaps all who love 'the Lord' their God, if they have not also fulfilled the following parts and have loved 'with the whole heart and with the whole soul and with the whole mind', have kept the commandment in part. Those alone, however, take up its greatness and preeminence in themselves, who not only love 'the Lord' their 'God', but also shall have taken up those three parts also. That means that 'with' their 'whole heart' they store up that whole commandment in themselves in respect to both its operations and its thoughts. 'And with' their 'whole soul' means that they are prepared to lay it down out of devotion to the God who created all things whenever the welfare of the Word requires it, because one loves God 'with the whole soul', so that no part of the soul is enticed to something alien to the faith. And with our 'whole mind' means thinking or mentioning nothing other than 'those things that are of God'.¹⁸ Consider if you can take the heart for the intellect that examines intelligible things and shows their source and principles, which is God, and the mind for making things known (for with the mind we make individual things known, and what is meant by each thing, as if we are walking among them in our mind and bringing them forth). And if someone should ingeniously understand the commandment about love that has been placed in relation to all three of these parts that have been mentioned, and has carefully considered the love of God in some individual believers, he will discover perhaps the complete commandment either in one, or perhaps in a second or third (and this, if it shall have been given), but in all he will discover the love of God possessing less or a little, or more, based either on the phrase 'with the whole heart' or the phrase 'with the whole soul' or 'with the whole mind'.

³ The 'second' commandment is also 'like' the former because it is the love of a human being who was made in the image of God, perhaps also in the likeness.¹⁹ But the following remarks must also be made in the exposition of the commandment that has been stated about the love of the neighbour. According to what is said in the tenth Psalm, 'The person who loves iniquity hates his own soul', and according to what is said in Proverbs, 'The person who rejects discipline hates himself'.²⁰ It is clear then that no one who loves iniquity loves

¹⁸ Mk 8:33.

¹⁹ See Gn 1:26.

²⁰ Ps 10:5; Prov 15:32.

'his neighbour as himself', since he does not love himself, and no one who rejects discipline loves 'his neighbour as himself', for he obviously does not love himself. Consequently, he who 'loves iniquity' and 'hates his own soul' cannot keep the 'second commandment'. Likewise, 'one who rejects discipline' loves some sin and, therefore, he who rejects any word of God's discipline 'hates his own soul'.

4 After this you will seek how 'all the law and the prophets depend on those two commandments'. For the text appears to say that everything written, whether in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy depends 'on these two commandments'. But how does the law laid down about leprosy, or about those suffering a flow of blood, or about menstruating women depend 'on those commandments'?²¹ And further, how does the prophecy about the capture of Jerusalem, or the vision of Egypt in Isaiah and other prophets, and the vision of Tyre and whatever is prophesied about Tyre or the prince of Tyre, and the vision of the quadrupeds in the desert in Isaiah depend 'on these two commandments'?²² Here is my opinion about this passage. The person who has fulfilled everything written about the love of God and the neighbour deserves to receive the greatest gifts from God, among which 'a word of wisdom by the Holy Spirit' heads the list, followed by the 'word of knowledge' which is 'according to the Spirit'.²³ And the one determined to be worthy of all these gifts rejoices in the wisdom of God, having a heart full of the love of God, his whole soul being illuminated with the light of knowledge, and his whole mind with the word of God. And because of gifts of this kind from God he certainly understands all the law and the prophets to be a part of the total wisdom and knowledge of God, and he understands that all the law and the prophets depend on and adhere to the principle of the love of God and neighbour, and that the perfection of godliness consists in love.

What we have said is indeed sufficient, nevertheless, to demonstrate its greatness, it is appropriate to add the following sayings also: 'Love is patient and kind; it is not puffed up, it does not act perversely, it is not ambitious, it is not irritated, it does not think evil, it does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices with the truth; it suffers all things, believes all things, hopes all things. Love never perishes'.²⁴ For no one with a timid disposition has love, or one who acts unkindly, or has the kind of jealousy the patriarchs had against Joseph, or Aaron and Miriam had against Moses.²⁵ And no one has love who is puffed up, or does something perverse, or who is roused to rage. Likewise, no one who thinks evil has love in his heart since he is defiled. The person who has love never rejoices over anything unjust, but always rejoices with the truth. One who has love endures every misfortune, does not believe selectively but 'believes all things'; does not hope partially, but 'hopes all things', nor is there

²¹ See Lev 13-15.

²² See Is 5, 19, 23; Ez 28; Is 30:6.

²³ 1 Cor 12:8.

²⁴ 1 Cor 13:4-7.

²⁵ See Gn 37:11; Num 12:1.

anything love does not endure, but it 'endures all things'. And because 'love never perishes', the apostle, confident that he had received it completely, said: 'Who will separate us from the love of God? Will tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Just as it is written, Because of you we are put to death all day, we are considered as sheep for slaughter'. For because of love he said, 'But in all these things we overcome because of him who loved us'. For on the basis of love never perishing, those voices were saying: 'For I am confident that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'.²⁶ And because the apostle possessed the two commandments of love of God and neighbour, he possessed in himself the revealed mysteries of the whole law and prophets, so that, understanding those mysteries, he might say that 'all the law and prophets depend on these two commandments'.

5 'And when the Pharisees had gathered, Jesus asked them, What do you think of the Christ, whose son is he? They say to him, David's. Jesus says to them, How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet? If, then, David calls him Lord, how is he his son? And no one could answer him a word, nor did anyone dare ask him anything from that hour'.²⁷

These very words stand in the one-hundred-ninth Psalm, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet'.²⁸ Whereas the Pharisees acknowledge that he who spoke is the Lord God to whom the second Lord Christ spoke, the Saviour asks them saying, 'What do you think of the Christ, whose son is he?' And when they respond, 'David's', he adds, 'If David calls him Lord, how is he his son?' This matter, therefore, is worthy of our consideration. What does the Saviour intend when he proposes the question about the Christ to the Pharisees so that they might state their view, and why was it that the Pharisees could not answer the question? Someone more simple will say of these discussions that the intention of the Saviour was to curb the impudence of the Pharisees who were proposing many scenarios to him, and likewise that of the Sadducees who had proposed the scenario of the seven brothers and their one wife.²⁹ Since, therefore, when the Pharisees and Sadducees made their proposals they seemed to have something to say, and by doing this they were not desiring to learn as disciples, but were tempting Christ, and they appeared to be teachers of the law, although they were not. Therefore, it was necessary that the Lord also propose a question to those who claimed to have knowledge of the law so that he might expose them before the people when they gave no answer to the questions, since he himself answered

²⁶ Rom 8:35-9.

²⁷ Mt 22:41-6.

²⁸ Ps 109 (110):1.

²⁹ See Mt 22:23-8.

all questions because he was competent in the profession proper to teachers to clarify and hand on divine teaching, but they did not know him who was the culmination of the prophets to be a prophet. In addition, the person who likes this explanation will add that this is why the passage in the Gospel also thus adds, 'And no one could answer him a word, nor did anyone dare ask him a word from that hour'. And the reason they did not dare 'ask him a word' later was that when they were questioned they could not answer him. For if their questioning had been from the desire to learn, he would never have set such things before them that afterwards they would not dare ask. But their questioning was to tempt him. He wished, therefore, to impede them by his questioning, so that being embarrassed, they might abstain from their impudence and afterwards ask him nothing. We have said these things in accordance with the understanding of a simple interpreter.

6 We say, however, that our Saviour and Lord knew himself made indeed 'from the seed of David according to the flesh, but predestined Son of God in power', and that all these things were what he was saying when teaching about himself: 'I am the truth, and the way, and the life', 'I am the door', 'I am the resurrection', 'I am the bread of life that descends from heaven', and he knew that he existed before even the birth of Abraham himself (because he also said: 'Before Abraham was I am'), and that he was Wisdom, and the living Word (that Wisdom, indeed, that 'God created as the beginning of his ways in his works', and the Word that 'was in the beginning with God, God the Word').³⁰ Knowing all these things about himself and seeing the Pharisees, and knowing that they could comprehend him insofar as the human dispensation and humanity goes, for they knew from the divine Scriptures that 'he was from the seed of David according to the flesh',³¹ and may also have thought him actually to be the son of David, but seeing them so far from understanding his divinity according to which he was the beginning of the created universe,³² constituted son of no other than 'God who is over all',³³ and wishing to show their estimation of himself to be unbalanced and to challenge them by his words that they might want to ascend in conversation and see in what way he was God the Word who 'was in the beginning with God',³⁴ he asked specifically, 'What do you think of the Christ, whose son is he?' So, when they answer and say, 'David's', he responds, demonstrating the sublimity of his divinity which is shown in the very beginning of the Psalm by saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet',³⁵ so that, even if they could not answer him at that time, nevertheless, they might take the opportunity from his words to give careful attention to the whole Psalm and observe something more about Christ, who exceeds not only human nature but also other offspring, of which it is said, 'In the splendour of the saints

³⁰ Rom 1:3-4; Jn 14:6; 10:9; 11:25; 6:41; 8:58; Prov 8:22; Jn 1:1-2.

³² See Col 1:18, 15.

³³ Rom 9:5.

³⁴ Jn 1:1.

³¹ Rom 1:3.

³⁵ Ps 110:1.

I brought you forth before the Morning-star'.³⁶ For it does not indicate in the splendour of which saints in particular, but speaks generally of all saints, that is not only humans, but also angels, when it says, 'In the splendour of the saints I brought you forth before the Morning-star'. And if they had also wisely considered that verse, 'The Lord swore and will not change his mind; you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek',³⁷ they would certainly have submitted themselves to a Saviour such as ours who had been dispatched from God as teacher and priest. But the reason the Pharisees could not respond to the words of Christ was that they perceived nothing great written in the Holy Scriptures about Christ, but only things about his human dispensation, and not even those in a manner worthy of a divine dispensation. For I do not think that they understood either that statement: 'Behold the virgin will conceive, and they will call his name Emmanuel', or this one: 'Behold, a star shall arise out of Jacob' to be about the birth of Christ.³⁸

7 But one will explain this statement that is found in the Psalm more opportunely: 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet',³⁹ when he plans to explain the Psalm in itself.⁴⁰ At the present, nevertheless, we have briefly tasted its meaning. Lest you imagine a sitting that is perceptible to the senses with two chairs and the Father and Son sitting on them in human form, understand that these things are said in a moral sense about the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Son that has been established by the Father and who is always at the right hand of the Father. But if someone does not want these things to be understood morally, let him explain how the statement is true that says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand', and that which states elsewhere, 'But to sit at my right hand and my left is not mine to give, but is for whom it has been prepared by my Father'.⁴¹ The person, therefore, who does not want to understand this in a manner worthy of the greatness of the understanding of Christ is compelled to say that at one time he will sit at the right hand of the Father, but at another (putting aside the rank of this kind of sitting at the right hand of the Father) he will sit privately with those for whom the Father has prepared that they sit at his right hand or at his left. Furthermore, he is compelled to say that he still has enemies while sitting at the right hand of the Father, for he will sit beside him 'until' they are made the 'footstool' of Christ's 'feet' by the Father. But when he shall have ceased sitting at the right hand of the Father then he will no longer have enemies since they who were previously the 'footstool' of his own 'feet' have begun to sit at his right hand or left in accordance with the arrangement of the Father. And so it happens that some of those sitting may sit in the prior place of the Father. But what could be more ridiculous than these

³⁶ Ps 110:3.

³⁷ Ps 110:4.

³⁸ Is 7:14; Num 24:17.

³⁹ Ps 110:1.

⁴⁰ This statement suggests that Origen had not yet commented formally on Psalm 110.

⁴¹ Mt 20:23.

suggestions? Next, if you wish to understand the sitting in a bodily manner, you will discover in the same Psalm that the Son sits at the right hand of the Father, as it says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand', and the Father sits at the right hand of the Son, as it declares in the following lines, 'The Lord at your right hand shatters kings on the day of his wrath.'⁴² We say, however, that it is not necessary to introduce a physical consideration into these words which are to be understood spiritually, for in the moral sense the Son is at the right hand of the Father and the Father is always at the right hand of the Son.

8 It is appropriate also to see how the enemies of the Saviour are made the 'footstool' of his 'feet' in a manner in keeping with the kindness of God who makes his 'enemies the footstool' of his 'feet'. For we must not assume that God makes 'the enemies' of Christ 'the footstool' of his 'feet' in the same way enemies are put under the feet of earthly kings when they destroy their own enemies. Do they not crush their adversaries without mercy? But God does not make 'the enemies' of Christ 'the footstool' of his 'feet' for destruction, but for their salvation, as we will make known with examples from the Holy Scriptures that indicate this very thing. For it is written in the Lamentations of Jeremiah in the second Aleph: 'How the Lord in his anger darkened daughter Zion; he cast the glory of Israel down from heaven to earth, and he did not remember the footstool of his feet?'⁴³ And notice how, when Israel was the footstool of God's feet she was glorious in heaven, but after she had been cast down so that she was not the footstool of his feet, she also ceased to be in heaven. For give close attention to what is said: 'He cast the glory of Israel down from heaven to earth, and he did not remember the footstool of his feet'. Likewise, the statement, 'Heaven is my seat, and earth the footstool of my feet' does not indicate the ignominy of earth, but its glory.⁴⁴ Earth perceives some small and extreme part of God which is called his feet in the moral sense. So too the church on earth in the beginning stages of the worship and knowledge of God is the footstool of Christ's feet, just as that sinful 'woman' doing penance was at Jesus' feet at the beginnings of her penance, for she was not able to pour the ointment of the fragrance of her good deeds on the head of Christ, but desired that she might stand even at the feet of the Lord and anoint them.⁴⁵ And when each of us understands himself in what the apostle says, 'We were ourselves at one time without understanding, unbelieving, erring, and serving various desires and pleasures', he will see how, since he was such before he was washed from them, he was an enemy of Christ, an enemy of justice, truth, wisdom, and peace, 'but after the kindness of God our Saviour appeared', he first became 'the footstool' of Christ's 'feet'.⁴⁶ And I, confident that that is the meaning of the Scripture, do not hesitate to assert that thus the Father says to the Son: 'Sit at my right hand,

⁴² Ps 110:5.⁴³ Lam 2:1.⁴⁴ Is 66:1.⁴⁵ See Lk 7:37-8; Jn 12:3; and below *SerMt* 77.⁴⁶ Tit 3:3, 4.

until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet'.⁴⁷ The apostle too, in the first letter to the Corinthians, introduces a meaning of the Scripture like this, namely, that so far as the subjection of those who once were enemies goes, they become the footstool of Christ feet, when he says, 'But now Christ has risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who sleep. Since indeed death came by means of a human being, also the resurrection of the dead has come by a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his order: first Christ, then these who belong to Christ, who have believed in his advent; then is the end when he shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father, when he has brought every principality, authority, and power to nothing, for he must reign until he places all his enemies under his feet. And the last enemy destroyed is death, for he subjects all things under his feet. And when it says that all things have been subjected to him, he clearly is excepted who subjects all things to him. But when all things have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who subjects all things to himself, in order that God may be all in all'.⁴⁸ We have given an interpretation of all these points in the proper place. Notice, nevertheless, how the term subjection is used in all those statements for the salvation of those subjected.

⁴⁷ Ps 110:1.

⁴⁸ 1 Cor 15:20-8.

Series 9–28 (Matthew 23)

9 ‘Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses. Do whatever they tell you to do, but do not do in accordance with their works, for they speak and do not act. And they bind heavy burdens and put them on the shoulders of people, but they themselves do not wish to move them with their own finger. And they do all their works that they may be seen by people; for they broaden their phylacteries and make the fringes of their garments large. They love the first places at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues and distinguished greetings in the forum and for people to call them Rabbi. But do not yourselves wish to be called Rabbi, for one is your master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for one is your Father who is in heaven. And he who is greater among you will be your servant. Therefore, he who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’¹

Frequently, but especially in Matthew, it is observed that the disciples of Christ are better than the rest of the crowds. And you will find in churches that some hear the divine teachings with delight, and affectionately approach the word. People of this kind are justly said to be disciples of Christ, and many others who are not such are said to be his people. And sometimes he says certain things to his disciples alone, not also to the crowds, as those beatitudes written in the Gospel of which Matthew, indeed, speaks as follows: ‘Seeing the crowds he went up into the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him, and opening his mouth he began teaching them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit,’ and the rest. Luke, however, says, ‘Lifting his eyes on his disciples he began saying, Blessed are you poor, because yours is the kingdom of heaven.’² He makes other things known to the crowds, however, as the parable of the sower declares.³ Matthew also writes as follows: ‘But while he was speaking to the crowds, behold his mother and brothers stood outside seeking to speak with him.’⁴ He was speaking the words written before these to the crowds, therefore, and when ‘someone’ had said ‘to him, Behold your mother and brothers are standing wishing to see you,’ he responded to the one who

¹ Mt 23:1–12.

² Mt 5:1–3; Lk 6:20.

³ See Mt 13:1–3, 34.

⁴ Mt 12:46.

told him this and said, 'Who is my mother, and my brothers?' Then, 'stretching out his hand; not over the crowds, but 'over his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brothers. For one who has done the will of my Father who is in heaven, is my mother and brother.'⁵ And setting out the preceding parables Matthew writes, 'Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea; and great crowds gathered to him so that he got into a boat and sat down, and all the people stood on the shore. And he spoke many things to them in parables saying, Behold a sower went out to sow'.⁶

And lest you think that the position of the narrative of the parable of the sower is hap and chance because Jesus was speaking it to the crowds, consider its positioning by Mark and Luke who wrote similarly. Mark writes as follows: 'He began again to teach at the sea. And many people gathered to him so that he got into a boat and sat on the sea, and all the people were on the land beside the sea. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and he said to them: A sower went out to sow'.⁷ And Luke writes in this way: 'And when many people were coming together and were going out to him from separate cities, he spoke a parable such as this: A sower went out to sow his seed'.⁸ And the evangelists, who clearly know the difference between the people and the disciples add, after the parable, that now he was not explaining the reason he was speaking to them in parables to the crowds, but to the disciples. Matthew, indeed, says: 'the disciples approached and said to him: Why are you speaking to them in parables?' And Luke says, 'But his disciples asked him what this parable means', but Mark says, 'And when they were in private, the disciples asked him what this parable means'.⁹ And see if you are able to hear and learn from the Gospel of John that the people of Christ are those who only believe and do not aspire to grow up in the word, and those are his disciples who are zealous for the better gifts, and receiving what is the first of all graces, 'the word of wisdom',¹⁰ apply themselves diligently. John speaks as follows: 'Jesus said to those Jews who believed, If you remain in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'.¹¹ Therefore, he says certain things to his disciples and certain things to the crowds, but he says other things to the crowds and the disciples at the same time such as these present words that we are now discussing.

Let us see, therefore, what he says 'to the crowds and to the disciples': 'The scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses'. I take this to mean something like this: Those who profess to interpret the law of Moses and pride themselves in this, or who profess to ascend above these things, sit 'on the seat of Moses'. Those, then, who do not depart from the letter of the law are said to be 'scribes'. Those, however, who claim something more, separate themselves as better than the majority in relation to which they are said to be Pharisees, which is

⁵ Mt 12:47-50.⁶ Mt 13:1-3.⁷ Mk 4:1-3.⁸ Lk 8:4-5.⁹ Mt 13:10; Lk 8:9; Mk 4:10.¹⁰ See 1 Cor 12:31, 8.¹¹ Jn 8:31, 32.

interpreted to mean 'divided and separated' (for 'division' is called Phares).¹² It is possible, therefore, even now to see scribes and Pharisees sitting 'on the seat of Moses' among the Jews. I do not mean that only 'scribes and Pharisees' who used to speak 'and not' act, and bind 'heavy' and unbearable 'burdens on the shoulders of people, but they themselves' were 'not' willing 'to move them even with a finger', sit 'on the seat of Moses'. For I think that those who understand and interpret Moses in the spiritual sense 'sit' indeed 'on the seat of Moses', but they are not the 'scribes and Pharisees' but are better than these. For such are the beloved disciples of Christ who interpret his word by the grace of God and discover things one after another that are significant. Before the advent of Christ, therefore, it was proper that they sat 'on the seat of Moses' who interpreted Moses' sayings well and reasonably. But after the advent of Christ 'they sit on the seat' of the church, which is the seat and throne of Christ. And just as the 'scribes and Pharisees' used to sit badly 'on the seat of Moses', but those who understood the law correctly and handed it down sat well, so too do some sit on the seat of the church saying what each one needs 'to do' but not doing it and binding 'heavy burdens, they place them on the shoulders of people, but themselves' do not want 'to move them with a finger'. The Saviour said of such people, 'Whoever shall break one of these least of the commandments and teach people so will be called least in the kingdom of God.'¹³ But there are others of those who sit who act before they speak, and speak wisely. These keep within bounds in relation to the diversity of shoulders, and place weights on them sparingly, and they themselves move them previously for the encouragement of others who hear. The Lord says of these people, 'But one who acts and teaches thus will be called great in the kingdom of God'.¹⁴

10 Furthermore, according to a simple tradition of what this saying means, 'Do whatever they tell you to do, but do not do in accordance with their works', we say that by these words he wants to show that there are some in the church who, so far as their word is concerned, can teach amazingly and set forth their teachings in a reasonable way, but are not willing to do what they say. Their teaching is to be heard, but their manner of life is not to be imitated. Therefore, he rebukes such teachers who not only 'do not do' what they teach, but also cruelly and mercilessly make demands without an appraisal of the strength of each hearer, but in relation to their own greater capacity. For example, they forbid marriage, even what is expedient,¹⁵ and they compel to excessive purity. They also teach abstinence from food and other things of this sort (to which it is not at all necessary to compel faithful people), and by their exposition they bind up heavy burdens beyond the will of Christ who says, 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light',¹⁶ and place them, so far as their word goes, on the shoulders of people, bending those over who are not sufficient to carry them

¹² Cf. *ComJn* 13.380.

¹³ Mt 5:19.

¹⁴ Mt 5:19.

¹⁵ See 1 Cor 10:23.

¹⁶ Mt 11:30.

and making them fall under the weight of the heavy commandments. And it is often possible to see those who teach such things acting contrary to their own words and being 'unwilling to move them' by the power of the soul, which in the moral sense is called 'a finger'. For many who teach purity do not observe purity. Those who exhort others to abstain from foods partake of such foods themselves (whether because they are pretentious or because they have been overcome by their desires) which they have renounced in words, teaching one thing in public but doing another in secret and privately, doing all things for human respect and vain glory, just as the following statement shows when it says, 'They do all their works that they may be seen by people.' And in general, they are all the kind of people who 'love the first places at banquets and greetings in the forum and for people to call them Rabbi', or something similar to this term 'Rabbi', as for example, those who want to be called Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon, when each of them ought, even if he is called this by someone, to show his awareness to God that he does not wish to be called by this title for which he has neither the knowledge nor the action. Even if he has these, nevertheless, he ought not want to be called by that title which belongs properly to another. For in the proper sense, the Lord Jesus is bishop,¹⁷ and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are presbyters, as is made clear to those who consider what is written of their seed in Genesis, or others who have lived worthily of this title, such as the apostles of Christ. Deacons, however, are the seven archangels of God into whose mysteries the seven deacons in Acts were ordained.¹⁸ The Lord, therefore, cuts off desires of this kind from our soul by these words which have been recorded, and exhorts us rather to be zealous for humility, which is, with God, the first reason for exaltation just as, on the contrary, a reason with God for humiliation is to love 'the front seats in the synagogues and the first places at banquets and distinguished greetings in the forum and for people to call them Rabbi'.

And take note that in addition to these words, he adds, 'Let the person who is greater among you become a servant,' and, 'the person who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.' So, it is clear from their phylacteries and fringes for show who they are who lust after vain glory; and from their pompous strutting and their garments and rings and shoes it is clear who they are who love 'to be called Rabbi by people'. If, therefore, in accord with what we have said, 'the scribes and Pharisees' who sit 'on the seat of Moses' are the teachers of the Jews, teaching the commandments of the law according to the letter, how does the Lord order us in the present words to do according to 'all things' that they say, when all the apostles forbid the faithful to live according to the letter of the law, as the letter of the apostles in Acts attests, which they sent to the Gentiles, that they observe nothing from the law except the laws about something sacrificed, strangled, and fornication.¹⁹

¹⁷ See 1 Pet 2:21-5.¹⁸ See Acts 6:5.¹⁹ See Acts 15:23-9.

But those teach according to the letter of the law and do not understand the meaning of the law spiritually, as the apostle says about them, 'But the end of the law is love from a pure heart, and faith that is not fictitious, from which some have gone astray and have turned to prattling, wishing to be teachers of the law, but understanding neither what they are saying nor the things about which they are making affirmations.'²⁰ For they are all prattling who expound the law of Moses according to the letter, and they fall short of the love that is 'from a pure heart and a faith that is not fictitious', where the 'spiritual law' is located.²¹ For circumcision, Unleavened bread, Passover, and laws about clean and unclean things according to the letter of the law are prattle.²² These, therefore, who 'have turned to prattling and wish to be teachers of the law' and are not, nevertheless, in accord with the truth of the law, 'speak' indeed the commandments of the law but do not understand those things they say nor what the sayings of the law mean 'about which they make affirmations'.

Therefore the Saviour says of those people: 'For they speak and do not do', as for example, 'they speak' about circumcision, about Passover, about Unleavened bread, about foods, about drinks, about feasts, about new moons, about Sabbaths, and about other commandments of the law, 'but they do not do' according to the intention of the law.²³ For they are not circumcised as the intention of the law has it, whence the apostle says, 'For we are the circumcision who serve God in spirit and have no confidence in the flesh';²⁴ nor do they sacrifice the Passover, since they are ignorant of the fact that 'Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us';²⁵ nor do they eat unleavened bread in accordance with the purpose of the law, which the apostle interprets saying, 'Let us feast, not in the old leaven nor in the leaven of evil and wickedness, but in the leaven of sincerity and truth.'²⁶ But they do not even celebrate the Passover in the physical sense since the law commands that it is necessary to sacrifice the lamb in Jerusalem, 'the city that the Lord God chose',²⁷ and 'for every male to appear three times a year in the sight of the Lord God.'²⁸ But we, who are disciples of Jesus who understand those 'scribes and Pharisees' who 'sit on the seat of Moses' performing circumcisions and the other physical commandments of the law, but are far removed from the spiritual commandments of the law, do and observe 'whatever' they say to us from the law, understanding the meaning of the law, but by no means acting 'according to their works'. For they give the impression that what they are saying comes from the law, nevertheless, they do not do as the law teaches. For they do not receive love in a pure heart nor faith that is not fictitious²⁹ where the meaning of the law is situated, nor do they understand that there is a veil on the letter of the law.³⁰ And they do not hear the prophet who understands this in the same way asking, 'Unveil

²⁰ 1 Tim 1:5-7.²¹ See Rom 7:14.²² See 1 Tim 1:5, 6.²³ See Col 2:15.²⁴ Phil 3:3.²⁵ 1 Cor 5:7.²⁶ 1 Cor 5:8.²⁷ See Dt 16:5, 6.²⁸ See Dt 16:16.²⁹ See 1 Tim 1:5.³⁰ See 2 Cor 3:14.

my eyes and I will reflect on the wonderful words of your law'.³¹ And so 'they bind up heavy burdens' and, as Luke says, 'unbearable',³² and place them on the shoulders of the disciples who listen to them. For the physical commandments of the law according to the letter are 'a heavy burden', and binding, not light, as Peter testifies in Acts saying, 'Why do you test God and wish to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But we believe that we are saved by the grace of God.'³³ His spiritual burden, however, is light, wherefore the Lord says to those who were weighed down and bound by the physical commandments of the law: 'Come to me you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke and see that my yoke is easy and my burden is light'.³⁴ Truly the Gospel, which is the spiritual law, is a light burden.

Furthermore, 'the scribes and Pharisees' who sit 'on the seat of Moses do all their works to be seen by people', receiving circumcision that can be seen, visibly removing physical leaven from their houses, and likewise introducing physical unleavened bread before people, and requiring the visible Jerusalem for all people, and doing everything in a comparable manner to these. For they regard 'those things that are seen and are temporal', and give alms that they might be glorified by people, and pray standing on the street corners that they may appear to be religious.³⁵ But true disciples of Christ, who look at things 'that are not seen and are eternal', pray in secret in their storeroom, and give alms in secret,³⁶ and fulfil the law in secret, as if made Jews in secret in relation to which the apostle says, 'For he is not a Jew who is plainly a Jew, nor is what is openly in the flesh circumcision, but he is a Jew who is one in secret, and circumcision, which is in the spirit not the letter, is of the heart'.³⁷ For they feast on the secret and invisible unleavened bread 'of sincerity and truth'; they also eat the Passover, Christ sacrificed for us, who said: 'Unless you shall eat my flesh you will not have eternal life in yourselves'.³⁸ And by the fact that they drink his blood, the true drink, they anoint the lintels of the houses of their soul, seeking glory not from people (as those did), but from God who sees secret things.³⁹

11 Next, let us see what the statement means, 'They broaden their phylacteries and make the fringes of their garments large'.⁴⁰

It must be recognized in these words that it is written of divine words in the law, 'Bind them on your hand, and they shall be active before your eyes'.⁴¹ The scribes and Pharisees, therefore, who 'do all things to be seen by people', write certain sayings of the law on two cut pieces of parchment, bind them up and wear one in their houses as if placing a crown on their heads because it is written on the front, and the other on their wrist, and they call them 'phylacteries'. And

³¹ Ps 118(119):18.

³² Lk 11:46.

³³ Acts 15:10-11.

³⁴ Mt 11:28-30.

³⁵ See 2 Cor 4:18; Mt 6:2, 5.

³⁶ See Mt 6:6, 4.

³⁷ Rom 2:28, 29.

³⁸ 1 Cor 5:8; Jn 6:53, 54.

³⁹ See Ex 12:7; Mt 6:2, 4.

⁴⁰ Mt 23:5.

⁴¹ Dt 11:18.

finding something similar about fringes in Deuteronomy they think they are observing the law when they make a fringe on some part of the garments that they wear.⁴² Even now, therefore, the Lord rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for these things with their physical and visible observations, and says, 'They do all things to be seen by people. For they broaden their phylacteries and make the fringes of their garments large.' The disciples of Jesus, however, do all their works to be seen by God alone; for they bind up the law of God on their hand spiritually in relation to their good work, and by meditation on the divine disciplines they make the divine precepts active, always moving them before the eyes of their souls, and they make the fringe of the power of Jesus full in that they imitate the Master.

12 And what must we say about these who 'love the first places at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues and distinguished greetings in the forum and for people to call them Rabbi'?⁴³

Clearly failings of this kind were not found only among the scribes and Pharisees alone at that time or are found among them. Even in the church of Christ those are found who not only frequent banquets and the tables of those providing them, but also love the first seats in them and do many things that they might become deacons first (they are not the kind Scripture speaks of, but those 'who devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers on the occasion' and on that account 'they will receive greater judgement'⁴⁴). And those who wish to become deacons of this kind strive to snatch up the visible 'first seats' of those who are called presbyters. And some, not satisfied with those seats, scheme for greater things, that they may be called bishops 'by people' (which is 'Rabbi'), when they ought to understand that to become a bishop one must be 'irreproachable' and the other things that follow,⁴⁵ so that even if one is not said to be a bishop 'by people', nevertheless he is with God. For the person who has the qualities in himself that Paul enumerates about a bishop, even if he is not a bishop before people, is a bishop with God even if he has not attained that position by human ordination. For one who has learned the discipline of medicine and can cure as a physician is a physician even if the sick do not entrust their bodies to him. And also, one who has learned the skill of piloting and can use that skill in the appropriate way is a helmsman, even if someone has not entrusted the piloting of a ship to him.

⁴² See Dt 22:12. Greek fragment: (For having heard) what is written in the law concerning the divine words, that 'you shall fasten them on your hand, and it shall be immovable before your eyes'; those who do their works 'to be seen by people', having written certain words of the law on two trimmed pieces of parchment and having bound up the one, they wear it as a crown on their head placing what is written on the forehead, and the other on the wrist of the other of their hands, and they call these 'phylacteries'. And so also having found something about a fringe in Deuteronomy, they think they are observing the law by making some fringe on some cord that they wear on their garments.

⁴³ Mt 23:6-7.

⁴⁴ Mk 12:40.

⁴⁵ See 1 Tim 3:2-7.

And you will find lovers of new glory and those jealous for glory 'from people' and not longing for it from God⁴⁶ desiring that some be brought before them as before judges and governors; and if one must say it, in this itself they make the extremely light burden of Christ an unbearable burden.⁴⁷ But the disciple of Christ, despising human glory, endures, and continues to intervene, and does all things that he may be seen by God. The disciple, seeing the meals of the Gospel parables, and the heavenly assemblies of those firstborn, and the gatherings and the markets where, according to the Song of Songs, the bride was, indeed love 'the first places' at the spiritual meals so that they may eat the better things of the spiritual foods and the first fruits of the spiritual banquet and not the left-overs of the others.⁴⁸ He also loves the 'first seats' with the apostles who sit 'on twelve thrones',⁴⁹ hastening to show himself worthy of seats of this kind by his good actions; and in this way he also loves the 'greetings' which occur in the markets, which we set out above. 'But' the just person does not love 'to be called Rabbi' either 'by people' or by any other, being certain that 'one is the Master of all, and all' who are under him 'are brothers' of one another. But also one who has been born by celestial birth, not only 'of water' but also 'of spirit', and has received 'the spirit of adoption' so that it might be said of him that 'he was' not born 'of the flesh' or of the will of man, but of God; being a son of no one occupied with earthly things and still existing below, calls no one 'father' on earth, as one who by every action completed in relation to God says 'our Father who art in heaven'.⁵⁰ And if someone is a servant of the divine words he never permits himself to be called 'Master', since he knows that it is 'Christ' in him when he has progressed well and who must be called Master by all who have advanced, and he openly acknowledges himself to be a 'servant' in accord with the commandment of Christ who says, 'Let him who is greatest among you be servant of all', since even Christ himself, although he is truly Master, professed to be a servant, saying: 'But I am in your midst not as one who reclines at table, but as one who serves'.⁵¹

And it is well that after all these words with which he has forbidden longings for vain glory he adds the words, 'He who has exalted himself will be humbled'. Would that all might hear that, but especially deacons, presbyters, and bishops, and, in particular, those who think these words not to have been written to themselves, 'He who exalts himself will be humbled'. And as they do not know that following clause, 'He who has humbled himself will be exalted', they do not hear him who says, 'Learn from me for I am meek and humble in heart'.⁵² But they are haughty, and by their pride they fall 'into the judgement of the devil',⁵³ nor do they seek, by means of humility, to ascend from the judgement of pride when they ought to remember the word of wisdom that says, 'The

⁴⁶ See Jn 12:43.⁴⁷ See Mt 11:30.⁴⁸ See Mt 22:2-10; Heb 12:22, 23; Cant 3:2.⁴⁹ See Mt 19:28.⁵⁰ See Jn 3:3, 5; Rom 8:15; Jn 1:13; Mt 6:9.⁵¹ Lk 22:27.⁵² Mt 11:29.⁵³ See 1 Tim 3:6.

greater you are, the more you should humble yourself, and you will find favour before God'.⁵⁴ It was the Lord who first brought this saying to its highest perfection. For however great he was, he humbled himself all the more. For 'although he was in the form of God, he did not think it robbery to be equal to God, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of a human being, and being found in form as a human being, he humbled himself even to death, and death of the cross. For this reason, God also highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name' and the rest.⁵⁵

13 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you close the kingdom of heaven before men; for you do not enter nor do you permit those entering to enter'.⁵⁶

Let those who dare say that God is not good because of the curses which he placed in his law against sinners hear how truly, as it were, the Son of that God who gave the law also himself speaks blessings on those who are saved in the same way that blessings have been placed in the law, but in the likeness of the curses placed in the law, places a 'woe' against sinners: Woe to you, and to you. And when those who complain about the God of the law hear these things and do not understand that they too have been said by a beneficent God, let them say what we ought to understand about Jesus who says, 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees'. Let those who admit that making those pronouncements against sinners is an act of kindness understand that it is like the intention of God in the curses published in the law. But both that curse and this woe that has been pronounced befalls every single sinner, not based on the pronouncement of the one who pronounces it, but based on the sins of the sinner himself who renders himself deserving to receive either those curses or these woes which God pronounced against them as discipline that he might turn them to the good. For a father, too, when he rebukes a son for the son's correction often utters some words that appear to be curses. He does not want him to become deserving of those curses, but desires rather to turn him away from them.

We have said these things to show that the Gospels agree with the law. And in the same way now, when Jesus says, 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, because you close the kingdom of heaven', he frightens the scribes and Pharisees so that they not close 'the kingdom of heaven against people'. And by closing 'the kingdom of heaven, the scribes and Pharisees' commit two faults at the same time: one is that 'they themselves do not' enter into the kingdom of heaven; the second is that they do not permit 'those entering to enter'. These two sins naturally are inseparable from one another. The person who commits one of them cannot keep himself from the other and likewise, to the contrary, the person who keeps himself from one cannot possibly not also keep himself from the other. For example, you can find no one entering the kingdom of heaven himself who would not permit others to enter, since forbidding others

⁵⁴ Sir 3:18.

⁵⁵ Phil 2:6-9.

⁵⁶ Mt 23:13.

'to enter' the kingdom suffices for his expulsion. He may not enter the kingdom of heaven for this very reason that he does 'not' permit others 'to enter', because one who 'causes one of the little ones' of the church 'to stumble' by prohibiting someone 'to enter' the kingdom of heaven will suffer the 'woe' that is written in the Gospel. And on the contrary, one who can cause another to enter the kingdom of heaven, if only permitting and forbidding were in his power, will even more enter the kingdom of heaven himself.

14 Since the Lord often says 'Woe' to the scribes and Pharisees, let us explain the reason for each 'Woe' in its proper place. But let us now give the reason for this present 'Woe'. Now the reason for the present 'Woe' is that they were closing 'the kingdom of heaven before men'. And by closing it before others 'they themselves' were not entering for the very fact that they were prohibiting those from entering who certainly would have entered if they had not shut them out. This present word is to be explained first on the simple level as if it pertained to the scribes and Pharisees who were among the Jews. For they were not content not to believe in the Lord themselves; in addition, they disparaged his teaching and subverted every prophetic Scripture about him, they blasphemed every work of his as if false and a deception from the devil saying, 'This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul'.⁵⁷ They behaved like murderers to those who believed in Christ, and by every means prohibited anyone from coming to Christianity by which means one might enter the kingdom of heaven. They were closing that which was to be openly announced and preached before all and shouted aloud among all people. And when they were closing 'the kingdom of heaven, they themselves' were not entering (for they did not want to hear him who said: 'If anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and he will come in and go out and find pasture'⁵⁸). 'Nor' were they permitting 'those entering to enter' (that is those who could believe because of the faith which had been declared about the Christ 'from the law and the prophets'⁵⁹). They demolished completely the beginning of their assent and, with every means of terror and deadly insolence, they prohibited, so far as they were able, those who wished to enter through the door by shutting it themselves.

Let us also join with this simple exposition this about those among us who sin, because all who provide an example of sinning among people by their bad life-style and who cause harm to those who are still very small and imperfect in Christ, weakening them and causing them to stumble,⁶⁰ appear to close 'the kingdom of heaven before men', and neither enter 'themselves nor' permit others 'to enter'. This sin is also found among the people, and especially among teachers who teach people about the justice of the Gospel, 'but they do not do' what they teach because they are wicked shepherds and therefore do not spare the sheep nor do they care for their safety. On the contrary, they always have

⁵⁷ Mt 12:24.⁵⁸ Jn 10:9.⁵⁹ See Rom 3:21.⁶⁰ See Mt 18:6.

their eye on profiting from people because they appear to feed the people when they do not, and they are discovered with filthy wealth and desires for vain glory.⁶¹ For those are the wages of the mercenaries who shut 'the kingdom of heaven before men' and do not enter themselves nor want to understand the saying, 'Strive to enter by the narrow door.'⁶² And since this is the struggle that surpasses all struggles, that someone should use force and seize the kingdom of heaven,⁶³ those words, 'You do not enter nor do you permit those entering to enter,' are properly addressed to such teachers, especially if we should see them by their bad life-style and arrogance and insults and avarice inducing, I would not say one of the little ones, but even, so far as they are able, all of them, to fall.

'Woe', therefore, to those who close 'the kingdom of heaven before people' either in this way or that, but blessed are those who open it whether by their speech or good work, just as he who said, 'a great door and evident is opened to me,'⁶⁴ or as the other apostles have opened. And if anyone will be an imitator of them, he will open 'the kingdom of heaven before people' by his justice and virtue and purity and wisdom. And the more one advances in piety, the more will he open 'the kingdom of heaven before people'.

I think, therefore, that all who openly acknowledge that they are entering the church, in general either close 'the kingdom of heaven before people' by their bad life-style in accordance with which they themselves are sinning, or they open it by their good actions in accordance with which they shall have lived justly. Those who are seen to hold distinguished offices in the church, such as bishops, presbyters, and deacons, do this especially. For when they live as they should and teach the word of truth as they should they open 'the kingdom of heaven before people' and, while they themselves are entering, they invite others to enter; but the evil, who are not shepherds but hirelings,⁶⁵ close 'the kingdom of heaven before people', nor do they hear what the apostle says: 'But we bear all things that we not provide an obstacle to the Gospel of Christ.'⁶⁶ In fact, it is possible to see many teachers who do not permit those desiring to enter 'to enter the kingdom of heaven,' especially when they excommunicate some people without a legal process and without a reckoning. They frequently prohibit those better than themselves to enter, not because of sins which they are committing, but because of some jealousy and strife. And 'they' indeed are not permitted to enter. The latter, however, who are sober in mind and alert in soul, overcome the tyrannies of the former by their patience and long-suffering and, although they have been forbidden, nevertheless, enter and inherit the 'kingdom of heaven'.

15 Next, let us consider if it is possible to see others, in addition to those we have discussed, who also close and open 'the kingdom of heaven.' For those

⁶¹ See 1 Tim 3:3, 8; Gal 5:26.

⁶² Lk 13:24.

⁶³ See Mt 11:12.

⁶⁴ 1 Cor 16:9.

⁶⁵ See Jn 10:11, 12.

⁶⁶ 1 Cor 9:12.

who are worthy of the vestment and competent to explain the Gospel and who present themselves to be such that they can truthfully say, 'Or do you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me?'⁶⁷ open 'the kingdom of heaven before men' when they show with all clarity and proof the profundity of the divine communications which have been spoken not from the earth, but from heaven and from the mind of the Lord who comes to humanity, with the result that, so far as concerns themselves, they want to introduce 'Gentiles and barbarians, wise and foolish'⁶⁸ to the religion of Christ. But those who because of their unwillingness to be taught and their injustice have placed themselves with much temerity in the profession of teaching before they have learned and come to know the truth,⁶⁹ and for that reason in imitation of the empty fables of the Jews⁷⁰ hand on the bodily stories of the Scriptures and not their spiritual meaning or intention. Furthermore, they disparage those 'who have risen with Christ and' require 'the things that are above' in the Scriptures 'and not the things that are on the earth,'⁷¹ nor do they even esteem the truth present in the earthly things of the Scriptures. These teachers, as far as they are concerned, 'close the kingdom of heaven before people'. They close it by their injustice and by attracting to themselves those who could, by hearing the more divine and advanced teaching and the profundity of the truth, 'enter the kingdom of heaven' by means of the heavenly teachings and actions that are consistent with them. What Luke writes is in agreement with this explanation: 'Woe to you lawyers, because you have removed the key of knowledge; you yourselves have not entered and you have prohibited others who were entering'.⁷² For those are indeed lawyers who complain of an allegorical exposition and wish to teach that the divine Scripture is clear and contains nothing more than the text shows, and do not accept any more divine meaning about circumcision, or the Passover, or Unleavened bread, or foods and drinks, or festivals, or about new moons or Sabbaths, for the Jews at that time were serving 'an appearance and shadow of future things'. They have, nevertheless, taken away 'the key of knowledge' with respect to its wording, that is by limiting all access to the law to things to be understood legally. Therefore, neither have 'they themselves' entered 'nor' have they permitted others 'to enter' so far as they themselves are concerned.

16 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you who traverse land and sea to make one proselyte, and when you have made one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as you are'.⁷³

After the advent of Christ, these words to the scribes and Pharisees are appropriately said of Jewish teachings which diligently go around numerous places of the world to persuade foreigners to live like Jews. For all who live like the Jews after the Saviour are taught to imitate the disposition of those who

⁶⁷ 2 Cor 13:3.

⁷¹ Col 3:1, 2.

⁶⁸ See Rom 1:14.

⁷² Lk 11:52.

⁶⁹ See 1 Tim 1:7.

⁷³ Mt 23:15.

⁷⁰ See Tit 1:14.

said at that time, 'Crucify, crucify him', and again, 'Remove such a one from the earth,'⁷⁴ and they are taught to accuse him like the priests of the people accused him then. And it is possible to see them even now, when a thief is judged and when a Christian bears testimony to the truth, wishing the imitator of Barabbas to be set free rather than the disciple of Christ. All these actions do not make the 'proselyte a son of Gehenna' simply but, as it is written, doubly over the scribes and Pharisees who made him a proselyte. But someone will ask on this passage, How is the disciple, a proselyte to those who now have been designated deplorable scribes and Pharisees, not made 'a son of Gehenna' equally with his teachers, but 'doubly'?⁷⁵ For he will say that he ought to become less 'a son of Gehenna', perhaps by a half in relation to him who made him a proselyte. Or, if someone concedes that a disciple should be 'as his teacher', the disciple ought to become 'a son of Gehenna' equal to his teacher. I think, therefore, that every person who is made a proselyte of the Jews from the Gentile way of life was a 'son of Gehenna' even before he was made a proselyte. For a life subjected to idolatry is sufficient to make a person a 'son of Gehenna'. The word of our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, saves such a 'son of Gehenna' and frees him by 'the laver of baptism',⁷⁶ giving him the 'power to become' a son of God⁷⁷ and showing him the way⁷⁸ that he might be made a son of God the Father who is in heaven. But the word of the Jews who do not believe in Christ not only does not set a Gentile free from Gehenna, but also adds several damnations to him, so that he becomes a son 'of Gehenna' even in relation to Judaism. And in this way a scribe or a Pharisee makes another 'a son of Gehenna' more so 'than' himself, not that he himself makes him 'doubly', but that when a person shall have become simply a son of Gehenna,⁷⁹ he is made 'doubly' a son 'of Gehenna' by the teacher's teaching. And in this way, he who teaches becomes the cause of his second error, so that he becomes a son 'of Gehenna' 'doubly' more than him who taught him badly. But another will take a different approach and say that those who have been nurtured on the Law of Moses from the beginning are now sons 'of Gehenna', because they did not believe in Christ. But those who left the life of the Gentiles, deciding once for all to leave idolatry in which they had been nurtured, and embraced the life of the Jews deserve a double punishment because they did not leave after a careful examination, nor did they wish to investigate the Jewish word and that Word himself who is seen to have been recognized in the Jewish word, that is the proclamation of the Christians, nor did they search carefully from those who are capable of instructing about each mode of life, so that they might understand what is the truer word and the preferable choice. At the same time, we learn from this passage that there will also be a difference in the torments of those who will be in Gehenna because one is simply a son 'of Gehenna' and another is 'doubly'.

⁷⁴ Lk 23:21, 18.⁷⁵ See Mt 10:25.⁷⁶ See Tit 3:5.⁷⁷ See Jn 1:12.⁷⁸ See Jn 14:6.⁷⁹ Klostermann's suggestion to fill a gap in the text.

But one must also see this, if someone might become a son 'of Gehenna' even more abundantly, as for example, triply, or in a multiple manner in relation to a multitude of sins; and if it is possible for someone to become a 'son of Gehenna' in general, as for example a Jew or a Gentile, or a preacher of some false teaching, or is it specific so that someone might become a son 'of Gehenna' through individual kinds of sins. For example, someone who commits fornication becomes a son 'of Gehenna', but one who also commits adultery becomes one 'doubly', but someone who also additionally commits theft becomes one triply (in relation to which it is written, 'by what measure you shall have measured, the same measure will be measured to you'⁸⁰). Consequently, a just person has glory heaped on him in relation to the number of his just acts, and a sinner is multiplied in Gehenna in relation to the number of his sins. But let the person who is able inquire what this Gehenna might be and in what passage of the Scriptures it is first mentioned, especially in the division of the inheritance of Jesus son of Nave where it is sometimes called the valley of the son of Enom, and sometimes the valley of Enom, which is Gehenna (for Gehenna is Valley), and he will observe that just as Jerusalem is the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, and certain other choice cities or villages, so too Gehenna.⁸¹ And let the careful reader of Jesus son of Nave see also what villages are reported there to lie neighbour to that valley which is called Gehenna. It does not seem to me to be safe to relate these things too copiously and clearly by ink, pen, and paper; and my wish is that we not appear to have spoken rashly and dangerously of these very topics which we are discussing.

17 'Woe to you, leaders of the blind, who say: Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but one who shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor. You fools and blind men! For what is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And: Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gift that is on it is a debtor. You fools and blind men! For what is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? One, therefore, who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything that is on it. And one who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And one who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who sits on it.'⁸²

This word also accuses the traditions of the Pharisees as not being correct. He does this also in that passage where he reproaches the traditions of the Pharisees that opposed the commandment of God, which had been laid down about honouring father or mother, when the Pharisees say, 'Whoever shall have said to a father or mother: the gift that I shall offer will profit you, will not honour his father.'⁸³ After this he adds, 'You have made the commandment of God void, to establish your tradition', and he offers an example from Isaiah who says, 'This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from

⁸⁰ Mt 7:2.⁸¹ See Josh 18:21–8.⁸² Mt 23:16–22.⁸³ Mt 15:5, 6.

me; and in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.⁸⁴ One of the Pharisee's traditions, therefore, was about such oath-taking, since some were swearing 'by the temple', but others 'by the gold of the temple', likewise some were swearing 'by the altar', and others by 'the gift on the altar', and they were saying that he is a debtor who has sworn 'by the gold of the temple' or 'by the gift on the altar', but he who has sworn 'by the temple' or 'by the altar' has no liability.

On that account the Saviour, speaking to the Jews against traditions of that kind and wishing to turn them from human traditions to the divine commandments, says that they are 'blind and foolish' who hand on such traditions, not seeing that nothing placed in the temple is sanctified by itself, but by the temple. In the same way, what is placed 'on' the altar is already judged to be a gift belonging to God because it has been received 'on' the altar. If, then, 'the temple' is the cause of the sanctification of the gold, and 'the altar' for the sanctification of the gift, how does it not appear foolish that this person who swears by the sanctifying object is not under obligation, but the one who has sworn by what has been sanctified is seen to be under obligation, as if what is sanctified is better than what sanctifies? Thus because the Jews also have the habit of swearing 'by heaven', he also adds this to the preceding words to reproach those who were more readily swearing 'by heaven' than by God, since he acts just as unreasonably 'who swears by heaven' as he 'who swears by the temple' or 'by the altar', because he who swears 'by heaven' also appears to swear 'by him who sits upon it', and he does not (as he thought) avoid danger because he does not swear by God himself, but 'by the throne of God'. And he spoke these words to the Jews when he was prohibiting people from paying attention to the traditions of the Pharisees. Otherwise, above, he clearly forbid swearing 'at all'.⁸⁵

18 But if it is necessary to disclose something hidden, or somewhat more profound, in such fields of the Gospel as it were,⁸⁶ even a meaning of the Scripture not conceivable by all, it must be said that every oath is a binding and confirming of the word of which it is sworn. Every testimony of the Scriptures, therefore, must be understood as an oath which is uttered to confirm and bind the word that we speak, so that 'every Scripture inspired by God'⁸⁷ is indeed a 'temple' of the glory of God, and the meaning placed in it is 'gold'. We ought, therefore, to reveal the meaning of the Scripture in relation to the testimony of all the words that we bring forward in teaching to confirm, as it were, the meaning that we are relating. For just as every piece of 'gold' that was outside the temple had not been sanctified, so every meaning that was outside the divine Scripture (even though it appears wonderful to some) is not holy because it is not embraced by the meaning of the Scripture which customarily sanctifies that meaning alone that it contains in itself, just as the 'temple' sanctifies

⁸⁴ Mt 15:6, 8, 9 (Is 29:13).

⁸⁵ See Mt 5:34.

⁸⁶ See Mt 13:44.

⁸⁷ 2 Tim 3:16.

its own 'gold'. We ought not, therefore, to confirm our own teaching, swear by our own understandings and adopt these understandings that each of us holds and thinks to be true as testimonies, as it were, unless he shall show those understandings to be holy because they are contained in the divine Scriptures as in some temples of God. All, therefore, are 'stupid and blind' who do not recognize that the 'temple', that is the text of the Scriptures, makes the meaning great and venerable, just as the sacred 'gold'.

But consider further whether we ought not understand the 'altar' and the 'gift' that is placed 'on' the altar in a comparable way with the temple and the gold placed in the temple. The 'altar', therefore, 'that sanctifies' the votive offering is the heart of a human being which is regarded as the ruling principle in a person; votive offerings, however, and gifts that are placed 'on' the altar, constitute everything that is placed on the heart. For example, you propose to pray; you have placed a votive offering of prayer on your heart as on some altar, that you might offer prayer to God. You have proposed to sing the psalms; you have placed a votive offering of the psalms on your heart as on some altar that you might offer a votive offering of psalms to God. You have proposed to give alms; you have placed a votive offering of almsgiving on your heart, as on some altar, that you might offer almsgiving to God. You have proposed to fast; you have placed a votive offering of fasting on your heart as on some altar ***.⁸⁸ Therefore, the heart of a human being makes their every votive offering venerable and holy, because the votive offering is offered to God. On that account a votive offering cannot be more honourable than the heart of the person from whom the offering is dispatched. Every person, therefore, is blind who sees the large amount of alms given by someone, or the psalms sung, or the long prayers or fasts, and without any judgement pronounces those things blessed and does not consider from what kind of heart the alms are offered or the psalms sung, or the prayers prayed or the fasts made. For the heart of one who has a pure heart is the 'altar that sanctifies' the votive offering.⁸⁹ For if the heart and conscience of a person 'do not prod him, he has confidence towards God',⁹⁰ not based on his gifts or the words of his prayer or psalm, although they appear well composed and chosen from the Scriptures, but because (as thus I say) he has constructed the altar of his heart well. One, therefore, who takes the 'altar' as witness, that is his heart as his ruling principle, and conscience, 'swears' by the altar, embracing everything that is contained in it. And one who swears, in accordance with what we handed on, 'by the temple' that is by the Scripture, is seen to swear by the Scripture and by the word and meaning of God which is contained in it.

But there is also a third point to mention: over the 'temple', that is over all Scripture, and over the 'altar', that is over every heart, is a certain understanding

⁸⁸ Diehl thinks something is missing in the text based on the way the preceding parallel sentences conclude.

⁸⁹ See Mt 5:8.

⁹⁰ See 1 Jn 3:21.

over the understanding of all Scriptures and over every heart, 'which has not yet entered the heart of man,'⁹¹ which, in the moral sense, is called 'heaven,' the 'throne' now not 'of the glory of God,' as the temple, but 'of God' himself, for the 'temple' of the glory of God is the temple in which 'we see in a mirror dimly.'⁹² But it is the 'heaven,' which is above the temple of God himself, where the throne of God is, where it is possible, 'when what is perfect has come' to contemplate 'with unveiled face'⁹³ the face of the mysteries of the truth which sit in this kind of heaven.

19 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint, anise, and cumin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faithfulness; you ought to have done these things and not omit the others. Blind leaders, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.'⁹⁴

This word ought to be addressed at the opportune time to those who show reverence to God in respect to the least things but in respect to things that are important and necessary despise the commandment and God himself who gave the commandments. Such things were also done among the Jews who considered themselves to be serving the law of Moses which prescribed giving a tithe of all their fruits to the Levites and priests. So, since it was easy to fulfil the law in the least things, they were tithing 'mint, anise, and cumin,' and all (if I may speak in this way) the least things, and fulfilling the light matters of the law, but they were not observing its weightier demands, that is 'judgement, mercy, and faithfulness': 'judgement' indeed, so that each one should judge all, and not just some, with just judgement, and should acquiesce to him who said, 'I want mercy rather than sacrifice,' so that each might offer the sacrifices 'of mercy' to God, so that by removing those things that belong 'to faith,' each one might be faithful. But since it was logical that some hearing the Lord saying those things about the least things being tithed would disparage the tithing of the least things, the Lord wisely adds, 'And you ought to have done these things' (that is 'judgement, mercy, and faithfulness') 'and not omit the others' (that is the tithing of mint, anise, and cumin). And he calls those scribes and Pharisees who omit the 'weightier matters of the law' and tithe the contemptible things of the fruits, 'blind leaders'. And he wisely says that such as those strain (that is, remove from themselves) the smallest transgressions, which he called 'gnats,' 'to swallow' (that is commit) the greatest transgressions, which he called 'camels,' animals of course that are perverse and big. And so, according to these words every person who 'omits the weightier matters of the law' (especially 'judgement, mercy, and faithfulness') is swallowing a 'camel'. And it is possible to find, not only among the Jews but also among us, many committing sins of this kind and 'swallowing camels' in that they are committing the greatest transgressions, and it is frequently possible to observe how people of

⁹¹ 1 Cor 2:9.

⁹² 1 Cor 13:12.

⁹³ 1 Cor 13:10; 2 Cor 3:18.

⁹⁴ Mt 23:23-4.

this kind display their religion in the smallest things. And well does he call them 'hypocrites', for wishing to acquire piety 'before men,'⁹⁵ they do not wish to undertake that piety which God regards as righteous. We must avoid, therefore, such insincerities of the scribes and Pharisees lest that 'Woe' also apply to us as well as to them.

20 But I think that all are said to be scribes in a figurative sense⁹⁶ who think that there is nothing more in the Scriptures than the simple language of Scripture shows, and in addition despise those who 'search the profundity of God.'⁹⁷ Likewise, all are Pharisees who justify themselves and separate themselves from others 'saying: Do not approach me because I am pure.'⁹⁸ And the Pharisees are thought to be related to the word Phares, separated, that is, people who have separated themselves from others; in the Hebrew language Phares means separation. And if we must also assume a figurative meaning⁹⁹ in such words of the Gospel, we must know that just as 'mint, anise, and cummin' are seasonings of foods and are not themselves primary foods, so in the manner of our lives some things are primary and necessary for the justification of our souls, such as 'the weightier matters of the law: judgement, mercy, and faithfulness'. Others, however, as if seasoning our actions, and commending them, and making them more delightful, do not constitute righteousness but are considered seasonings of righteousness as for example abstinence from laughter, fasting, genuflection, persisting in assembling, fidelity in participating in the life of the church, and other things like these. The spiritual matters which are righteous in themselves are referred to as 'judgement, mercy, and faithfulness'. It is disgraceful, therefore, to attend to (that is to tithe) these least things, but to offer no regard (that is, not to pay a tithe) to God for the things that are necessary. And those who do and teach these things, just as previously, are 'blind leaders'. And how are they not thought to be 'blind' whom the size and perverseness of camels eludes, that is the actions of the perverse, nor do they see that there is nothing profitable in straining and being a circumspect examiner in unimportant things when things that are primary and truly pertain to the glory of God are being neglected? Since, therefore, there are many also among us who are thought to live prudently in respect to insignificant things, but have no esteem for themselves in respect to things that are necessary, the present discussion confounds such people, since it does not at all forbid observing those light matters, but admonishes keeping very carefully those

⁹⁵ See Mt 6:3-5.

⁹⁶ The Latin translator has used *moraliter*. He often uses this term to translate the Greek *tropologia*, as can be seen in those books where there is a Greek text as well as the Latin. See Volume I, note 96 in the Introduction.

⁹⁷ See 1 Cor 2:10.

⁹⁸ Is 65:5. Cf. below *SerMt* 89. In a Fragment on Titus Origen cites this as a Montanist saying (PG 14.1306 A-B).

⁹⁹ See note 96 above.

that are primary and more beneficial. He, therefore, strains all things who separates out what is filthy, earthly, and not adorned with divine concerns from those that are transparent in nature, pure, and just according to him who teaches, 'Let us feast not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'¹⁰⁰ But you will find many who are thought to believe who have unstrained words, actions, and thoughts. For this reason, 'fire will devour' their carnal actions 'as straw,'¹⁰¹ tormenting even the soul together with the body because of the inveterate physical transgressions in it. For just as it is not possible to cut away innate growths on bodies without great pain and suffering by those who are afflicted, so it is with the carnal sins committed by those who (if I may speak this way) have made their souls flesh, for which reason it is said of such souls, 'My spirit will not remain in those people because they are flesh.'¹⁰²

21 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of extortion, intemperance, and deceit. Blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and dish so that the outside might become clean.'¹⁰³

This word instructs us that we should hasten to be just, not to appear just. For one who is diligent to appear just cleanses the 'outside' and cares about things that are seen but neglects his heart and conscience.¹⁰⁴ He does not consider that it follows that one who is diligent for those things that are 'inside' and is diligent to cleanse his thoughts, is also diligent to make those things clean that are 'outside'. But if someone is diligent for those things that are seen and neglects the inner things of his soul, such a person must be filled 'inside' with greed, lewdness, envy, and a multitude of other evils. Since everyone who is anxious about his salvation (which is 'inside') is also anxious about reputation (which is 'outside'), but not everyone who is anxious about reputation from 'without' is also anxious about his salvation from 'within'. For example, it is written, 'He who looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in his heart.'¹⁰⁵ That man, therefore, who keeps himself from the act of fornication but commits fornication in the lust of his heart, has cleansed 'the outside of the cup and dish' or of the bowl,¹⁰⁶ but 'inside' it is full of 'intemperance'. But also, the person who gives alms in pursuit of glory from men is seen to cleanse 'the outside of the cup and dish' by giving alms 'before men,'¹⁰⁷ but 'inside' he is full of the desire for vain glory 'and of intemperance'. And whatever good a person has done because of God which is not from a pure conscience is seen as pure 'outside', but 'inside' is full of evil. But also, all teachers of false doctrine are cups that have been cleaned 'outside', as it were, because of the religious appearance that they feign, but 'inside' they are 'full of extortion' and seduction, by which they draw people away to error, and they are 'ravenous wolves'

¹⁰⁰ 1 Cor 5:8.

¹⁰¹ See 1 Cor 3:12, 13.

¹⁰² Gn 6:3.

¹⁰³ Mt 23:25, 26.

¹⁰⁴ See 1 Tim 1:5.

¹⁰⁵ Mt 5:28.

¹⁰⁶ See Lk 11:39.

¹⁰⁷ See Mt 6:1.

concealed under 'sheep skins',¹⁰⁸ who devour simple souls who cannot see that they are ravenous wolves because of the covering of sheep skins.

22 But if one must reflect on all things in the words of the Gospels in a figurative sense,¹⁰⁹ one must discern why the 'scribes and Pharisees' are said to cleanse the 'outside of the cup and dish' in Matthew, but in Luke a cup and bowl are mentioned.¹¹⁰ Each, therefore, describes vessels of food and drink; and both, indeed, mention a 'cup' (which is for drink), but both do not mention a 'dish', but one a bowl and the other a 'dish' (each, nevertheless, is considered a vessel for food). Therefore, according to each evangelist there is some spiritual drink and spiritual food which we receive in the words of the Scriptures of the law or the prophets. And so, every word by which we are given a drink spiritually, or every narrative by which we are nourished, is a vessel of drink and food. We are admonished, therefore, not to be concerned about the words or narratives which are the 'outside', but the things that are 'inside', that our heart may be filled with the pure meanings in the drinks and nourishments and not with the words or their ornate arrangements, because 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power'.¹¹¹ Take for example one who is diligent to produce a composed discourse rather than one filled with beneficial meaning; the cup of his narrative has been cleansed 'outside', but 'inside' it is filled with the filth of vanity. Whence Paul, who was not accustomed to cleansing the 'outside of the cup and dish', but the inside, confessed that he was untrained 'in word but not in knowledge',¹¹² and his speech was indeed plain, nevertheless pure because of the purity of his knowledge. But those who were speaking 'in the wisdom of speech' and by this emptying the cross of Christ,¹¹³ were offering their words as clean on the 'outside' but 'inside' filled with unclean knowledge, 'extortions, and intemperance' of life. Likewise, one who on hearing a word or some Scripture of the law is delighted by its exterior arrangements rather than the interior and beneficial meanings loves a 'cup' or 'dish' that is cleansed 'outside' but is filthy 'inside'.

23 And if we must add a third explanation related to the previous ones, we say that the texts of the law and the prophets are the 'cups' of spiritual drink for the soul and the 'dishes' of the necessary foods of faithful people or the 'bowls' of foods wisely concealed, of whose legal or prophetic 'cups' and 'dishes' and 'bowls' the 'scribes and Pharisees' are diligent to show the exterior and common meaning and hasten to show that this is pure and holy. Disciples of Christ, however, are eager to cleanse the inner, spiritual meaning and to sanctify it with knowledge and credible explanation so that they may eat and drink the

¹⁰⁸ See Mt 7:15.

¹⁰⁹ See note 96 above.

¹¹⁰ See Lk 11:39.

¹¹¹ 1 Cor 4:20. The Greek word *dynamis* (power) in Christian Greek also sometimes meant 'meaning', which may be how Origen understood it here.

¹¹² 2 Cor 11:6; cf. 10:10.

¹¹³ See 1 Cor 1:17.

law and the prophets cleansed on the 'inside', transcending the external meaning of the words and desiring to hear and receive the inner mystical meaning. It is good, therefore, to clean carefully the 'inside of the cup' or 'dish', or bowl, because for one who has first cleaned 'what is on the inside of the cup', those things on the 'outside' also become truly clean; and the vessels of words are found to be clean when their true and spiritual meanings have been made clear.

24 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whitened sepulchres which appear beautiful on the outside, but within are full of the bones of the dead and of all filthiness. So also, you appear to be just to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity'.¹¹⁴

Just as above, 'inside they are full of extortion and intemperance', so also here 'they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity', which are compared 'to the bones of the dead and universal uncleanness'. For hypocrisy, when it is some simulation of a good, has no vitality from that good that it simulates but (if I may speak this way) is a bone of that virtue which it is simulating. ***¹¹⁵ The righteousness or purity is dead. For if we hear wisely what the present text wants to show, let us understand that all simulated righteousness is dead righteousness, and even more, is not righteousness. Just as a man who is dead appears to be a man but is not a man, so also purity that is dead is not purity; and that is dead which happens not because of God, but in simulation on account of men. And as it is in mimes, those who take on the persons of others and are not themselves those whom they are imitating but seem to be, so in the case of one who simulates righteousness, his simulated righteousness is not righteousness but appears so, for it is not righteousness, but a figment of righteousness. So also in seduction, feigned purity is not purity but is an appearance. For this reason, people of this kind are properly compared 'to whitened sepulchres appearing beautiful on the outside', for those who do not know how to examine the things within appear righteous 'on the outside' from their own perspective, but 'inside' they are full 'of the bones of the dead.'

There are as many bones and impurities in them as the good works they simulate from their evil desire; and 'on the outside' they appear righteous 'before men,'¹¹⁶ not to those whom Scripture calls 'gods', to whom the Word of God is something beneficial, but before those who die 'as men'.¹¹⁷ It would be bad to have even one bone of a dead person 'inside' oneself, or any single impurity. But now look at the exaggeration of the Scripture about the evil of the hypocrites. For just as sepulchres 'are full of bones and all impurity', so also those are 'full of hypocrisy and iniquity', simulating not in some one thing, or in the sight of one, or two, or three in all their life (although even this would be the worst evil), but they live in simulations all the days of their lives, and they are one thing but they are thought to be another. Some are lustful 'within', but

¹¹⁴ Mt 23:27, 28.

¹¹⁶ See Mt 6:1.

¹¹⁵ Klostermann posits a gap in the text here.

¹¹⁷ See Ps 81(82):6.

'without' they display themselves as pure, being simulators of purity and pretenders of virginity; others are simulators of righteousness when they are unrighteous 'within'; and others are simulators of other virtues while they are 'full' of the opposite vices 'within'. Some are also simulators of martyrdom, and some of the dignity of bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or ecclesiastical knowledge, or doctrine. These people have only masks and a display of virtues, but they are truly enemies of those same virtues that they simulate.

25 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the sepulchres of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous and you say that if we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not be their allies in the blood of the prophets. Therefore, you bear witness against yourselves that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you escape from the judgement of Gehenna? Behold, therefore, I am sending you prophets, wise men, and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and will persecute from city to city, that all the righteous blood might come upon you that has been shed on the earth from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah the son of Barachiah whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you that all these things will come upon this generation.'¹¹⁸

The extent of the text's concern at first sight does not appear sufficient to threaten rationally those who are building 'the sepulchres of the prophets' and adorning 'the monuments of the righteous'. For so far as this alone goes, they were doing something worthy of praise, because they were building 'the sepulchres of the prophets' and were adorning 'the monuments of the righteous'. They were not in agreement with the works their fathers had undertaken against the prophets and saints, especially because they say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not be their allies in the blood of the prophets'. How, therefore, do they deserve to receive a 'woe'? And if someone says, 'They were not responsible so far as that work goes and their verbal acknowledgment, but they were worthy of blame because they gave 'testimony' against themselves that they were the sons of those 'who killed the prophets'—this is not true. For in a case how can a person be responsible for something that does not occur as the result of that person's will? For each man does not choose whose son he is, whether he comes from a good or bad man.

Therefore, they were neither guilty nor innocent because they were building 'the sepulchres of the prophets' and were saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not be' guilty. It was because in those very matters and in the imitation of their crimes they were bearing 'testimony' against themselves that they were the sons 'of those who killed the prophets' by filling up the 'measure of' their 'fathers' and further adding what was lacking, completing

¹¹⁸ Mt 23:29–36.

the murdering of the prophets and just men by the murder of Christ, the Son of God. This is why it was not possible that those who were detained as guilty of an act of this kind escape 'from the judgement of Gehenna'. The blood of Christ did not satisfy them, but they further killed and crucified those 'prophets' or 'scribes' who had been sent by Christ, and scourged them in their 'synagogues', and persecuted them 'from city to city'. It was just that for all the murderous things they committed they suffer the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people, since the patience of God no longer tolerates the magnitude and multitude of their crimes. But it comes on the generation of those who filled up the 'measure of' their 'fathers', and have added the 'prophets and wise men and scribes' of Jesus Christ, 'all the righteous blood that has been shed on the earth from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah the son of Barachiah whom you killed between the temple and the altar'. He charges the killing of Zachariah to the scribes and Pharisees, as if he had not been killed by their fathers but by themselves; for thus it is written: 'Whom you killed between the temple and the altar'.

But those who were reproached by Christ could not have killed 'Zachariah son of Barachiah', one of the twelve prophets, whose writings we have in hand.¹¹⁹ But he means 'Zachariah' father of John, of whom we cannot show by the canonical Scriptures that he was either the son of 'Barachiah' or that the scribes and Pharisees killed him 'between the temple and the altar'. But a certain tradition has come to us that there is some place in the temple where virgins were permitted to stop and pray to God, but women who had experienced the bed of a man were not permitted to stop in that place. And after Mary had given birth to the Saviour, she entered and stopped to worship in that place of the virgins, and when those who knew that she had given birth to a son forbid her, Zachariah stopped and said to those forbidding her that she was worthy of the place of the virgins since she was still a virgin. Therefore, as 'Zachariah' was

¹¹⁹ The following is a parallel to this discussion in an anonymous Greek fragment in the *Scholia Commentary* of Peter of Laodicea: 'For those now reproached by the Saviour could not have killed Zachariah the son of Barachiah who was numbered among the twelve prophets, but it is likely [as Josephus says] that the Zachariah now mentioned was the father of John, of whom we are able to show from the Scriptures neither that he was the son of Barachiah nor that the scribes and Pharisees killed him "between the temple and the altar". But some such tradition has reached us that at that time there was some place in the temple where virgins were permitted to enter and worship God, and those who had already experienced intercourse with a man were not permitted in that place. Mary, therefore, after giving birth to [our] Saviour went to worship and stood in the place of the virgins. And when those who knew she had given birth were forbidding her, Zachariah said to those forbidding her that she was worthy of the place of the virgins since she was still a virgin. Since, therefore, he was clearly contradicting the law and permitting a wife to be in the place of the virgins, those of that generation killed him "between the temple and the altar". They are reproached by the Saviour, therefore, not as the sons of those who killed the prophets and Zachariah after the prophets, but as themselves having killed him. And it is not strange if it turns out that Zachariah, the father of John, has the same name as the one among the twelve prophets. So too the father of the father.'

very clearly acting against the law and permitting a wife to stand in the place of the virgins, the men of that generation killed him 'between the temple and the altar'. Moreover, let us demand that those who do not accept a tradition of this kind provide an explanation of how Jesus reproached them because of Zachariah, not as the sons of those who killed 'Zachariah' immediately after the prophets, but as those who themselves killed Zachariah 'between the temple and the altar'. If, therefore, the word Christ addressed to the Pharisees and scribes who were present at that time is true, 'whom you killed between the temple and the altar', it is not possible to understand that 'Zachariah' who is one of the twelve prophets. Nor furthermore is it strange if it turns out that each 'Zachariah' and their fathers have the same name.

The word that Christ speaks wants to communicate something such as this: that you who excuse yourselves from the blood of the prophets 'and say, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not be their allies in the blood of the prophets', and 'you build the sepulchres of the slain 'prophets'; by these very things that you have dared against me you 'bear testimony against yourselves' that 'you are the sons' of your murdering 'fathers' by filling up what was lacking in their iniquities by my blood and that of my prophets. For they did not crucify Christ, but you have crucified him, having become the worst 'serpents', the generation of those 'vipers who killed the prophets', closing the way of escape 'from the judgement of Gehenna' to yourselves because of the magnitude of your crimes which you committed against Christ, and against his 'wise men', and against his 'prophets', and 'scribes', and you have further dared to separate yourselves from the society of your fathers and to excuse yourselves from 'the blood of the prophets'.

26 It is fitting that someone who understands the Scriptures according to the simple history object and ask why he did not say up to the blood of John, son of Zachariah, especially since 'the law and the prophets' prophesied 'up to John'.¹²⁰ We will say to him that it is a clear fact that the scribes and Pharisees did not kill John, but Herod did.¹²¹ For even if the scribes and Pharisees did not believe John (just as it is written: 'If we say, From heaven, he will say to us, Why, then, did you not believe him?'¹²²), nevertheless they still had a certain respect for his name, not daring to say in response to Christ's question about John's baptism that it was from men; for they feared the people who believed that 'John was truly a prophet'.¹²³ Why, then, would he reproach these who did not kill John as if they were his killers? But he reproached them as the killers of Zachariah, saying, 'Whom you killed between the temple and the altar'.

It must be said further on this text that the 'generation' of sinners was not punished as soon as the sin had been committed, but when a subsequent 'generation' needing to atone for the sin of its fathers against itself added, in addition,

¹²⁰ Mt 11:13.

¹²¹ See Mt 14:3–10.

¹²² Mt 21:25.

¹²³ See Mt 14:5; 21:26; Mk 11:32.

worse sins to the sins of their fathers; and so, if many generations should sin against some nation or city, the nation is punished or the city is destroyed. So then, the Jewish nation, although inflicting many evils on the prophets, was not to be punished immediately when the homicide against the prophets began but later, in the patience of God, when they added the blood of Christ over and above that of the prophets, and filled up the 'measure' of their 'fathers', then they were punished more deservingly. It was not, therefore, the sin that Cain committed when he killed his brother,¹²⁴ or the sin of those who killed 'the prophets' which 'this generation' of Jews who lived in the time of Christ took up. It was necessary, rather, that the patience of God which was with the nation of the Jews be completed to its capacities, so that after many out-pourings of the blood of prophets and just men, Jerusalem and Judaea not having been abandoned previously, suffered this later with the blood of Christ, since God was acting magnanimously so that the 'scribes and Pharisees', with the people in agreement, might take upon themselves the blood of the prophets of Christ and, according to the Gospel, that of his wise men and scribes, whom they killed and crucified and scourged 'in their synagogues' and persecuted 'from city to city'. Consequently, when all had been cast out of Judaea, the place was desolate, emptied of all the saints, and it suffered whatever they suffered from Vespasian and Titus. We have explained these matters in the bodily sense.

27 But if it is also necessary to explain these words figuratively,¹²⁵ we will say the following on the passage. I think that just as Christ came concealed in a body so that a man was seen by carnal people who look at the appearance of his body and do not consider his mighty works, but God was seen by spiritual people who do not look at the appearance of the body but consider his works of power, so too is all divine Scripture embodied, but especially that of the Old Testament. For the spiritual and prophetic meaning of Scripture is concealed in the story of the events related so that every Scripture is understood in relation to history by ordinary people, but in relation to a spiritual mystery by those who are spiritual and perfect.

With this preface before us, let us return to the word. Just as the bodies of the prophets themselves were in sepulchres when they withdrew from this life, but their souls and spirits were 'in the region of the living',¹²⁶ so too must we regard the prophetic utterances. Their narration in relation to simple history is the body, but the spiritual sense and deepest truth of the Scriptures is the soul and spirit which inhabits the simpler historical narratives. And we can suitably think of the texts themselves of the Scriptures and the books as the 'sepulchres of the prophets' in which the narrative remains located as if it were a body placed in a sepulchre. Those, therefore, who understand and receive the spiritual

¹²⁴ See Gn 4:8.

¹²⁵ See note 96 above.

¹²⁶ See Ps 114:9.

meanings of the Scriptures and their truth concealed within, contain the souls and spirits of the prophets, having become themselves the region of the living prophets. But those who do not comprehend or seek to know these meanings, but pay attention only to the simple narration and the history of the events, adorn the bodies of the prophets placed in the texts and in the books as if placed in certain sepulchres. Such were the 'Pharisees' who quite correctly have been designated 'Pharisees' (that is, 'cut off'), who have cut off the spiritual meanings of the prophets from the bodily history as if removing the soul of the prophets from the body and killing the prophecies themselves and making them lifeless, as if they contain nothing spiritual. They are truly 'hypocrites' building and adorning only the 'sepulchres of the prophets' which contain the bodily history, that is they study the writings themselves and the books of the prophets. They do not understand that they are adorning dead bodies (that is historical narratives), and they appear to act piously about the memory of the prophets, but they are impious and wish to allege, by this action, that they are not allies 'of those who killed the prophets', but, adding to the crimes 'of those who killed the prophets' and filling up the 'measure of their' iniquity by this action, they show that they do not believe in Christ who is not predicted in the simple histories of the prophets, but in their spiritual meaning.

And know without doubt that wherever the reason for Jewish disbelief is seen to be that they do not believe Jesus to be 'the Christ of God', it is always because they have devoted their life to the bodily histories, choosing to believe that there is nothing spiritual in them. Take for example what is prophesied in Zachariah and says that he will 'enter' Jerusalem 'on a she-ass and foal' and he will destroy 'the chariots from Ephraim and the horses from Jerusalem'.¹²⁷ If someone wants to understand this of Christ in the historical sense of the letter, it does not fit; for Christ is not related to have destroyed physical and sense-perceptible chariots from Ephraim or physical horses from physical Jerusalem. But if you look at the assemblies of falsehood itself among the heretics who are joined as if by some kind of yoke and have a sort of evil harmony among themselves, whom the word of truth is accustomed to destroy,¹²⁸ you will see how Christ, the Word of God, destroys the spiritual chariots from spiritual Ephraim.¹²⁹ Ephraim is always used as a figure of heresies which have separated themselves from the church of Christ just as Ephraim separated itself from the tribe of Judah. For just as the divine Word spiritually 'threw' horse and rider of the Egyptians 'into the sea',¹³⁰ that is the wicked man with the devil who mounts and harnesses him, so also he has destroyed the horse from Jerusalem, that is whoever shall have subjected himself to the devil as his rider and not to Christ, just as these are acceptable horses of Christ of which Habakkuk

¹²⁷ Zach 9:9, 10.¹²⁸ See 2 Cor 6:7.¹²⁹ See Zach 9:10.¹³⁰ Ex 15:4.

says, 'Because you will mount your horses and your cavalry is healing',¹³¹ that is mount the apostles and other saints in whom Christ dwells. For this reason, we say, 'These will glory in chariots' (pointing to Ephraim) 'and these in horses' (pointing to the adversaries of Jerusalem), 'but we will glory in the name of our God. These have been bound and fell, but we arose and have been set erect'.¹³² These who give 'testimony' against themselves that they are 'the sons of those who killed the prophets', by this action fulfil the 'measure' of their 'fathers' by adding disbelief in Jesus to the disbelief of their fathers. This has no other source than the fact that they devote themselves to nothing more than the edifices of the sepulchres of the prophets, that is to attentiveness to the prophetic writings and books alone.

For some are scribes of the unfruitful law, but others are scribes who are sent by Christ according to the Gospel, whose spirit makes alive and whose letter does not kill, as does that of the law,¹³³ for those who follow the letter of the law fall into infidelity and vain superstitions, but those who follow the letter of the Gospel (that is, its simple narrative) are saved, because even the simple narration itself alone of the Gospel is sufficient for salvation for the simple. And if you should see scribes of the law and the Pharisees acting not only against 'the wise men' of the Gospel and the words that are prophesying of Christ, but also against the 'scribes' of the New Testament, you will see how (so far as they are concerned), they are killing 'the prophets' of Christ and crucifying his 'scribes' by the defamation of their words, and are scourging them in their synagogues. It is frequently possible, therefore, to hear among the heresies, which are the spiritual Pharisees, how with their tongues as if with the whips of their evil speech they scourge Christians and persecute them 'from city to city', sometimes indeed even physically, but at another, spiritually, wishing to drive them out as it were 'from' their own 'city' of the law, and the prophets, and the Gospels, and apostles and push them 'into' another, foreign 'city' of the Gospel of someone or other by their deceitful persuasions as if they were persecutions. The apostle said something about this because of false apostles: 'I am amazed that you are so quickly removed from the grace of God which called you, to another Gospel which is not another, except that there are some who trouble you'.¹³⁴ Because of this 'all the righteous blood will come upon' them, the blood, that is, which they poured out by the fact that they want to overturn the truth of the Scriptures, which is rightly called the blood and life of the Scriptures because all Scripture is dead if it is not understood in relation to the truth. They, therefore, pour out the truth of the Scriptures as if it were the Scripture's 'blood', just as the blood 'of Abel was poured out'.

And not only then did the voice of the blood of Abel cry out to God,¹³⁵ but the truth of the Scriptures, always poured out by the impious in the sense that we mentioned (begun by the blood of Christ, that is, the truth of the Gospel),

¹³¹ Hab 3:8.¹³² Ps 19:8, 9.¹³³ See 2 Cor 3:6.¹³⁴ Gal 1:6, 7.¹³⁵ See Gn 4:10.

persistently calls out to God through all the Scriptures against those who want to overturn it, and 'the blood of the covenant',¹³⁶ that is the truth of the prophetic Scriptures, cries out against those who think it is impure and do not want to be sanctified in it as if in living and sanctifying blood. In this way, they also pour out the blood 'of Zachariah', which means 'Remembrance of God'. For everyone who is eager to destroy the remembrance of God in those whom they cause to stumble is seen to pour out the blood 'of Zachariah the son of Barachiah', whose name also means 'the praising of God'. For by the praising of God we are mindful of God. And if we ought not leave the name 'Abel' without discussion, we say that 'Abel' means 'Mourning'. One, therefore, who accepts the words, 'Blessed are those who mourn',¹³⁷ saves Abel, but one who does not receive it pours out the blood 'of Abel', that is the truth of the mourning of salvation. Therefore, what is written will be fulfilled in his case: 'Woe to you who laugh now, because you will mourn and weep'.¹³⁸ The impious kill the remembrance of God 'between the temple and the altar' when the lewd corrupt the 'temple' of God, and its altar is polluted by the carelessness of disgraceful prayers, when the prayer of someone becomes his sin, as also it is said of the prayer of Judah, 'Let his prayer be counted as his sin'.¹³⁹

28 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often did I want to gather your sons as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing? Behold, now your house is left to you abandoned. For I say to you that from now you will not see me until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'.¹⁴⁰

It is worth investigating why, when the Saviour was speaking before hearers who included the scribes and Pharisees who boasted that they knew precisely what things belonged to the law and the prophets,¹⁴¹ he said 'Jerusalem' had killed 'the prophets' and stoned 'those sent' to it when not much history of this kind is prophesied in the old Scriptures that are read in their synagogues. We read that Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern of mud;¹⁴² he was not, however, killed in Jerusalem. But neither do we read that Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or any of the prophets suffered any such thing, so far as my memory recalls. But examining the second book of Chronicles, where many things are written about the illustrious prophets, I discovered that Asa, angered at the prophet Hanani who censured him, put him in jail, but he did nothing more against him.¹⁴³ But also Ahab ordered Micaiah, who prophesied against him, to be imprisoned and to eat the bread of tribulation, but he did not kill him.¹⁴⁴ But we read of one who was stoned, 'Zechariah, son of the priest Jehoiada', when he censured the people.¹⁴⁵ We do not, therefore, find more prophets killed in Jerusalem, or stoned (other than I mentioned) who had been sent to Jerusalem.

¹³⁶ Heb 10:29.¹³⁷ Mt 5:5.¹³⁸ Lk 6:25.¹³⁹ Ps 108(109):7.¹⁴⁰ Mt 23:37-9.¹⁴¹ See Rom 2:23.¹⁴² See Jer 45:6 (LXX).¹⁴³ See 2 Chron 16:7-10.¹⁴⁴ See 2 Chron 18:14-26.¹⁴⁵ See 2 Chron 24:20-1.

For this reason, we must see if perhaps we must explain the word of Christ from books that are more secret which are current among the Jews, and not only the word of Christ, but also that of his disciples, Stephen the first martyr, and Paul the apostle. For Stephen spoke as follows: 'O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers did, so also you. For which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced the coming of the Just One, of whom you are now his betrayers and murderers'; and after this 'they cast him out of the city and they stoned Stephen, calling out and saying.'¹⁴⁶ And Paul says the following about the killing of the prophets in the first letter to the Thessalonians: 'For you have become imitators of the churches of God that are in Judaea in Christ Jesus, because you yourselves have suffered the same things from your countrymen as they too from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and have persecuted us, and are not pleasing to God.'¹⁴⁷ And to the Hebrews as follows: 'They were stoned, they were sawn in pieces, they were tempted, killed by the sword, they wandered in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in need, restricted, afflicted with pains, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts, in mountains, in caves, and in pits of the earth.'¹⁴⁸ It is related, therefore, in unclear Scriptures that Isaiah was sawn in pieces and Zechariah and Ezekiel killed. And I think that Elijah, who wandered in the desert and in mountains, went around in sheepskins and goatskins. But assume that someone denies that the Epistle to the Hebrews is by Paul, and also denies the secret book of Isaiah; but what will he do with the words cited of Stephen, or Paul to the Thessalonians about prophets who were killed, or of our Lord himself? Or how will he deny that which Paul mentioned to Timothy, saying, 'Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so also those resist the truth?'¹⁴⁹ And if he should also look at what is related in the first letter to the Corinthians, 'What eye has not seen, or ear heard', how will anyone be able to deny all these things?¹⁵⁰

We have said all these things discussing the remark, not unaware that there are many fabrications of secrets by the impious who speak 'iniquity against the height.'¹⁵¹ The followers of Hypythianus¹⁵² use certain fabrications, and those who are followers of Basilides use others. We must, therefore, give careful consideration so that we not accept all secret books that are passed off in the name of saints, because of the Jews who, to confirm false doctrines, have perhaps fabricated certain works to destroy the truth of our Scriptures; we must also be careful not to deny all works that relate to the explanation of our Scriptures. It is the mark of a great person to hear and do what is said: 'Prove all things; hold on to what is good.'¹⁵³ Nevertheless, because of those who are not able, as

¹⁴⁶ Acts 7:51, 52, 57, 58.¹⁴⁷ 1 Thess 2:14, 15.¹⁴⁸ Heb 11:37, 38.¹⁴⁹ 2 Tim 3:8.¹⁵⁰ 1 Cor 2:9.¹⁵¹ Ps 72:8.¹⁵² Unknown person.¹⁵³ 1 Thess 5:21.

money-changers,¹⁵⁴ to discern whether words are true or false, and are not able themselves to guard carefully that they hold the true in themselves, 'let them abstain from every evil appearance.'¹⁵⁵ No one ought to use books outside the canonical Scriptures to confirm doctrines.

Nevertheless, if someone accepts the 'To the Hebrews' as an epistle of Paul, he will say that we ought not use the plural at all in many references. For not many were sawn in pieces, but Isaiah alone; nor were many stoned but only Zechariah, son of Jehoiada; and only Zechariah son of Barachiah was killed by the sword; so also Elijah went about in sheepskins and goatskins; and other similar examples.¹⁵⁶ But further, let us investigate what is written in Luke when the Lord says, 'Because it is not possible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.'¹⁵⁷ If, therefore, 'it is not possible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem,' that is, be killed, you will ask if no one was a prophet after the destruction of Jerusalem, lest perhaps a prophet killed 'outside Jerusalem' prove Christ's word false. And if the Scriptures, on account of Agabus and the daughters of Philip the evangelist (not because of the false prophets of Phrygia¹⁵⁸) compel us, let us ask whether every just person is perhaps in Jerusalem and is not 'outside Jerusalem,' because 'it is not possible' for one who is outside Jerusalem to be afflicted with sufferings for the sake of the Word.

But it must be seen how 'Jerusalem' killed 'the prophets.' I think that just as they are accustomed to say in common speech, 'The city cried out,' as if those who are in the city is meant, likewise: The city went out to meet him, that is those who are in the city—so: 'Jerusalem' killed 'the prophets,' that is those who were in Jerusalem, on account of whom it is said, 'Jerusalem' had killed 'the prophets.' And if city is put for citizen, again it raises the question, Who are to be designated the sons of Jerusalem of whom it is said, 'How often I wished to gather your sons.' But we say that sons are always to be said to be the followers of the preceding cities. But the Jerusalem which is free from the servitude of sin, which is above in its mode of life, 'which is our mother'¹⁵⁹ does not kill 'the prophets' or stone 'those who are sent' to her. It is another in the likeness of that Jerusalem that kills and stones 'the prophets.' There are often some in that Jerusalem who are ignorant and do not fear God, who (so far as they are concerned) kill and stone with thoughtless words people advanced in word and life and who do not forsake the churches' rule. Those who are accustomed to saying new things and do not pay attention to the 'sound word'¹⁶⁰ of our Lord Jesus Christ suspect these people because of the profundity of their doctrines.

The Lord says, therefore, to Jerusalem, the murderess and stoner of the prophets: 'How often did I want to gather your sons as a hen gathers her

¹⁵⁴ See Resch (1967) 118, Agraphon 87.

¹⁵⁵ 1 Thess 5:22.

¹⁵⁶ See Heb 11:36–8; 2 Chron 24:21; Mt 23:35.

¹⁵⁷ Lk 13:33.

¹⁵⁸ A reference to the Montanist prophets who arose in the late second century CE.

¹⁵⁹ Gal 4:26; see Phil 3:20.

¹⁶⁰ Tit 2:8.

chicks under her wings, and you were not willing?' How does the Lord Jesus say here, as if he frequently 'wished to gather' the Jews but did not gather them because of the obstinacy of those 'not willing' to believe: 'How often did I wish', when it is clear that he had, on a single occasion, taught the Jews in a body? But Christ was present, not only in the present, but he was also always essentially present in Moses and the prophets, and even more in the angelic ministrations for human salvation through each single generation, and in this way what he said is fulfilled, 'How often I wished'. For he always 'wished' throughout each single generation and hastened to accomplish the will of his Father in them even if he was not in the body, just as now at the end of the ages he nevertheless always hastens 'to gather the sons of Jerusalem'. For his cries 'wishing to gather the sons of Jerusalem' are contained in the law and the prophets, where it is written of him: 'Spreading his wings he received them, and he took them on his shoulders'.¹⁶¹ Every day Christ must 'gather the sons of Jerusalem' (about which many things are said in Isaiah and the other prophets). Even today the Son of God is gathering the dispersed 'sons' of God 'as a hen her chicks under her wings'. But if someone will not be gathered by him, he will be judged as one who 'was not willing' to be gathered by him. 'For the Son of man has come to seek and to save what is lost', and he died, 'not for the nation alone, but to gather the dispersed sons of God into one'.¹⁶² And he threatened the Jews (who were the sons of that 'Jerusalem' which was below) who were not willing to be gathered 'under' his 'wings', saying: 'Behold now your house is left to you abandoned'. And Christ appears always to warn and say to those who are not willing to be gathered 'under' his 'wings', 'Behold now your house is left to you abandoned', that is, your soul and body. For not only the body, but also the soul of those who sin is left 'abandoned', and (just as in the desert) foxes make holes in them, and serpents, the generation of vipers, make beds.¹⁶³

And he says to those unwilling to be gathered to him, 'that you will not see me from now until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. And the Jews at that time did not see Christ, for he did not appear to them when he arose from the dead as he had previously, but only to the fathers who were worthy of judgement and grace.¹⁶⁴ And until they understand their particular desertion and say in repentance, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', they will not see the Son of God, nor will they see his Word, nor will they contemplate the beauty of the Wisdom of God.¹⁶⁵ But if someone from us has wanted to be gathered 'under the wings' of Christ, but has refused to be gathered 'under' his 'wings' on account of evil works, he will no longer

¹⁶¹ Dt 32:11.

¹⁶² Lk 19:10; Jn 11:52.

¹⁶³ See Mt 8:20; 23:33.

¹⁶⁴ Greek fragment: For although he appeared to some saints after the resurrection, he did not appear to the unbelieving Jews.

¹⁶⁵ See 1 Cor 1:24, 30.

see the Word of God, especially from that time when he shuns, in action rather than body, him who gathers day after day. And he will not see the beauty of the Word, that is Christ himself, until he turns and repents of his conceived evil and says, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. For when the Word of God has been blessed, and the Wisdom of God has been blessed, he will at that time 'come in the name of God' and of the Father, into the heart of the person, whenever someone shall have turned to him.

Series 29–62 (Matthew 24)

29 'And Jesus went out of the temple and departed; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But Jesus answered and said to them: Do you see all these things? Truly I say to you, a stone will not be left here on a stone which is not destroyed.'¹

After Christ had predicted everything that was to come on Jerusalem, he who had preserved the temple went out 'of the temple' lest it fall while he was in it. For it stood as long as the Word was with the Jews, not taking the kingdom of God from them, and the affairs of the Jews were safe and sound. But afterwards, in accordance with the word that he had spoken, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruit',² he took the kingdom of God away and gave it to the Gentiles, and then both Jesus and the kingdom of God were with the Gentiles. Now neither Jesus nor the kingdom of God is held among the Jews because they have been forsaken 'like a tent in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, and like a besieged city'³ because of the crime that they committed against Christ.

Each one who accepts the Word of God is a temple of God, so that it is rightly said to him: 'Do you not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?'⁴ Therefore, even though each one is a holy temple of God because of the Spirit of God that dwells in him,⁵ if he should sin, this becomes the cause of his desertion so that Christ departs from him. The result of this is that he who was previously a temple of the Son of God afterwards is a deserted house⁶ and there is not left 'in it a stone on a stone which is not destroyed' from all the teachings and edifications⁷ of the good life. For this reason, as we remember the story of the desertion of Jerusalem, we ought to look to ourselves, that Christ not go out from the temple (that is, from us), that the buildings of our temple may be safe and sound, adorned with stones and gifts so that those who see the buildings that are in us may say in amazement,

¹ Mt 24:1, 2.

² Mt 21:43.

³ Is 1:8.

⁴ 1 Cor 3:16.

⁵ See Rom 8:9.

⁶ See Mt 23:38.

⁷ This is the same word (*aedificatio*) that I translate 'buildings' in contexts below. Most Latin versions of Mt 24:1 have this word instead of *structura* which appears in the Biblical text quoted at the head of Ser. 29.

'Behold what great stones and what great buildings.'⁸ But in relation to this text, it is worth considering why the disciples speak to Jesus as they do and show 'him the buildings' of stones as if he were someone who had never seen the temple itself but has come for the first time from elsewhere as a stranger. We must respond to this as follows: since Christ prophesied above of its future destruction and thus threatened its desertion in the words, 'Behold now your house is left to you deserted,'⁹ when the disciples hear this they are amazed that such a great 'building of the temple' should be reduced to nothing. For this reason, they say to Jesus (as another evangelist says clearly), 'Master, behold how great the stones and how great the buildings'. They want, of course, to persuade him to show mercy on that place, and not do what he had threatened to do.

30 Let these things be said in respect of the physical sense, but let us address the moral sense in the following way. Since the admirable construction of human nature has occurred, the temple of God¹⁰ of course and of his Word, the disciples and other saints (not only at that time, but also now), acknowledging that the works of God in relation to the human creation are to be admired, intercede in the presence of Christ and appeal to him not to forsake humanity because of its sins or, they move him to kindness towards humanity's works that are to be admired rather than to wrath towards its iniquities. It can be interpreted in another way. Just as that temple was not overthrown all at once but little by little as time continued, so too every human being who receives the Word of God into himself is a temple, and if one does not depart totally from the Word of God after sinning but still preserves partial traces of faith and of the religion of God's commandments in himself, this person is a temple partly destroyed and partly still existing. But the person who has sinned and afterwards has no concern for himself but continues to avoid the faith and life which is in the Gospel, is diminished little by little until he totally withdraws 'from the living God'.¹¹ This person is the temple in which 'a stone' of doctrine 'will not be left' on 'a stone' of the commandments of God, 'which will not be destroyed'. We ought, therefore, to look to ourselves that the whole building of piety continues to be complete in us, so that, adorned with the stones of saving doctrines and decorated with the gifts of good works, we may receive in ourselves the power and glory of God and Christ, who is the Word and Wisdom of God.¹²

31 And someone introduces a third explanation that goes as follows: the temple of God had been built by putting together words with symbolic meanings, that is, the whole Scripture of the Old Testament constructed, of course, in relation to history. Moses, or the prophets who constructed it by the positioning of words and the ordering of sayings, built something for all to admire

⁸ Mk 13:1.⁹ Mt 23:38.¹⁰ See 1 Cor 3:16.¹¹ See Heb 3:12.¹² See 1 Cor 1:24.

because of the beauty of the stones, that is, the choice sayings and the gifts of the thoughts that are to be praised. The disciples show this to Jesus, taking up all the Scriptures. Christ responds to them and says that this material and first building must be destroyed by the Word so that a more divine and mystical temple of another Scripture may be built. But someone before us has explained that the temple means Scripture, and that 'he who opposes and is lifted up over everything that is said to be God,'¹³ who sits in the temple of God as Antichrist, is the false word that is contained in the Scriptures. This imitates the truth by bringing forth testimonies of impious teachings from the Scriptures for those not willing to be pleased from elsewhere, and is himself the one 'who opposes' and sits on the chair of the Scriptures and their edification, 'displaying himself as if he were God.'¹⁴ And it is always possible to see the words of the heresies sitting as antichrists in the temple of the Scriptures and wishing to please those who hear them, as if each one of them is himself God the Word in the Scriptures.

32 'And when he was sitting on the Mount of Olives his disciples came to him in private saying, Tell us when these things will be, and what will be the sign of your coming and the consummation of the age.'¹⁵

'When Jesus went out of the temple,'¹⁶ after he had spoken about it, he came to the Mount of Olives and sat there with his disciples. But I think the Mount of Olives is a mystery of the church of the Gentiles in which olive-trees have been planted that can say individually: 'But I am like a fruit-bearing olive-tree in the house of God.'¹⁷ And perhaps also the roots of the good olive-tree are in this Mount of Olives, but the branches of a wild olive-tree have been inserted in the place of the branches that 'have been cut off because of unbelief'.¹⁸ And the farmer who resides on the Mount of Olives is Christ, the Word of God affirmed in the church, who always inserts the branches of the wild olive-tree into the good olive-tree of the fathers, Moses and the other prophets, so that becoming plump from the holy prophets (because they carefully understand their meaning and defend Christ of whom they prophesy) they may exhibit fruit that is abundant and plump, after the previous olives have been shaken off so that they cannot be used because of the curse that was in the law.

Next, we must think about the fact that some of the disciples who approach Jesus approach him 'in private,' possessing greater confidence in this action with him as if they were members of his household (as when they ask him about the explanation of the parables), but others were not questioning him 'in private,' but in public. Pay attention in addition to the difference among the latter, because sometimes indeed the Pharisees approach either tempting him or questioning him in any way you will,¹⁹ but on the other hand, sometimes others approach desiring to learn, nevertheless, they never approach 'in private'

¹³ 2 Thess 2:4.

¹⁴ See Mt 23:2; 2 Thess 2:4.

¹⁵ Mt 24:3.

¹⁶ Mt 24:1.

¹⁷ Ps 51:10.

¹⁸ See Rom 11:16-20.

¹⁹ See Mt 22:23, 35.

apart from a multitude. And perhaps those who have undertaken an extraordinary life up till now and, for this reason, are confident in the presence of Christ,²⁰ having something more than those who approach Jesus on the basis of ordinary faith, say to him: 'Tell us when these things will be?' What are 'these things'? What he said: 'A stone will not stand here on a stone that is not destroyed.'²¹ They want to learn not only this, but also to know the 'sign of the coming of Christ and of the consummation of the age'. They are seeking two things from him: the 'sign' of his 'coming' and of the consummation of the age. 'The coming' of the Son of God, therefore, and 'of the consummation of the age' were indeed believed by many, but especially by those who were pursuing a more refined life.

It is also possible to see the double coming of Christ in another way, that is, the coming of the Word into the soul. At first it is crude, and then as they begin to recognize Christ, since they are not able to see the splendour of his beauty, they say, 'We saw him, and he had no form or beauty, but his form was shameful.'²² But the shameful form of the Word is the foolish preaching of Christ, when we preach Christ born and crucified.²³ And the second coming of Christ is in perfect people, of whom the steward of the Word himself says, 'But we speak wisdom among the perfect.'²⁴ And these perfect people have become lovers of his beauty and ask the Word, that he gird himself with his rational sword and put it on the mystery of his fleshly nativity which is mystically called his thigh.²⁵ For disciples of this kind praise the beauty and splendour of the Word. Joined to this second coming is the consummation 'of the age' in the person who is approaching perfection²⁶ and says, 'May I never boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.'²⁷ For if the world has been crucified to the just, to whom 'the world has been crucified', then the consummation 'of the age' has also occurred in them. Those, therefore, who have confidence for approaching Christ 'in private' necessarily want to learn 'the sign of the coming of Christ and of the consummation of the age', so that, aided by what they have learned of the coming of Christ and the consummation, they might present themselves as worthy to see his second coming, even the second coming that we are proposing is the end of the 'age'.

33 'And Jesus answered and said to them: Beware, that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and they will deceive many.'²⁸

Those who understand in a simple manner think that these words mean only that 'many' were to come claiming that they were Christs, possessing certain marvellous powers and words by which they incite many to believe, that

²⁰ See 1 Jn 3:21; 5:14; Eph 2:19.

²¹ Mt 24:2.

²² Is 53:2, 3.

²³ See 1 Cor 1:21, 23.

²⁴ 1 Cor 2:6.

²⁵ See Ps 44:4.

²⁶ See Eph 4:13.

²⁷ Gal 6:14.

²⁸ Mt 24:4, 5.

is, those who show themselves deserving of deception. But John says in his letter, 'And just as you heard that antichrist will come, now many antichrists have come to be, whereby we know that it is the last hour'.²⁹ He is teaching by these words that every word that is foreign to the truth and claims that it is the Word of God is antichrist, for it is possible to understand what he says in this way: 'And now many antichrists have come to be,' since what is true is one. And, as the narrative of readings shows, there were not many men in the time of the apostles who said they were Christs, unless perhaps Dositheus the Samaritan from whom the Dositheans get their name, and Simon who is referred to in Acts, who pronounced himself to be a great power of God. I am aware of no one besides these either previously or shortly afterwards.

But every word that professes to be an explanation of the Scriptures and the faith that is in them but does not contain the truth is justly understood to be an antichrist, coming 'in the name' of Christ and saying, 'I am the Christ,' lying and incapable of showing even an outward form of truth in itself. And quite often some understandings appear true to those who search the words of Scripture to discover its meaning when they are not true, and sometimes they are attracted by other words tinged with plausibility so that the meaning which is true against the false opinions is not easily discovered prior to the discovery of the meaning that is truer and more trustworthy. Therefore, I think Christ responded as he did to the question of his disciples when they asked, 'When will these things be? And what is the sign of your coming and the consummation of the age?' He answered: 'Beware, that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and they will deceive many'. For truly the person who fulfils that command that says, 'Be prudent money-changers',³⁰ and that which says, 'Test all things; hold what is good; abstain from every form of evil',³¹ will see many deceived by incorrect understandings and by words claiming to be the Christ, the Word of God. And would that only those who are outside the church were deceived; it would be easy to avoid deception. But as it is, those very people who profess to belong to the church are duped and deceived about some absolutely essential issues, as if their disagreement itself is proof that even those who are within are deceived.

But consequently, just as there is usually a diversity of errors among those erring in respect to these material ways, some indeed even go off in error contrary to the common way that is being sought; others, however, digress only a little from the narrow way that is correct so that they are capable of being recalled. There are many differences among those who go astray. This is the way we see also those who have gone astray from the truth.³² Followers of Marcion, Basilides, Apelles, and the Ophites, who have a taste for things totally contrary to the truth, stray far from the proposed way. But some do not disagree

²⁹ 2 Jn 2:18.

³⁰ See Origen, *Com/Jn* 19.44; Resch (1967) 112-13.

³¹ 1 Thess 5:21, 22.

³² See James 5:19.

about essential points that are common and obvious, as for example, about one God who gives the law and Gospel, or about Christ Jesus, the firstborn of the whole creation, who at the end of the age 'came into the world' as the prophets had predicted and received the true nature of human flesh into himself, so that he even submitted to birth from a virgin, and accepted death on the cross, and arose from the dead, and made the human nature he had received divine.³³ And in addition they believe most certainly that the Holy Spirit which later was given to the apostles was in the patriarchs and prophets, and they believe in the resurrection of the dead just as the Gospel teaches, and in all things that are declared in the churches. But they propose new doctrines about other things that are not few even if rather trifling in importance, and they, in any case, are among those who are deceived by false understandings and words coming 'in the name' of Christ, who is the Word and the Truth. It is bad indeed to discover someone erring in the moral life, but it is much worse, I think, to go astray in doctrines and not understand things in accordance with that truest rule of the Scriptures, for if we are to be punished for moral sins, even more so if we sin because of false doctrines. For if living a life of good morals is sufficient for salvation for people, how are the philosophers among the Gentiles or many among the heretics who live self-controlled lives by no means saved? It is as if the falsity of their doctrine obscures and pollutes the manner of their lives.

But I think that the statement in the twenty-third Psalm, wishing to show that general purity which is not only in actions but also in knowledge, says, 'Who will ascend onto the mountain of the Lord, or who will stand in his holy place? The one whose hands are innocent and heart is pure.'³⁴ And it says in Proverbs, 'Who will boast that his heart is innocent? Or who is confident that he is pure from sins?'³⁵ In my opinion, therefore, the person who is pure in heart and innocent in heart is none other than the person who possesses a heart that is pure and innocent of every false doctrine; thus, I also think this person who is blameless in the actions of his life is innocent in hands and pure from sins. But it ought to be known that (so far as the truth is concerned) it is impossible for anyone to be innocent in hands and pure from sins, so that one is not pure in heart and innocent of false doctrines; just as, on the contrary, it is impossible to be pure and innocent in heart of false doctrines, so that one is not innocent 'in hands' and pure from sins. For these follow one or the other and are not separated from one another, a word pure in soul and blameless in life.

We have discussed this issue rather fully, teaching ourselves in relation to those points that we saw in the passage, so that we may guard ourselves against every error that comes from false doctrines, whether this involves those that are clear and are key issues or those that appear minor. We should listen to him who said, 'You shall not turn aside to the right or to the left', from him who said, 'I am the way',³⁶ and we should not be deceived. Let us be vigilant so that

³³ See Col 1:15; Jn 3:19.³⁴ Ps 23:3, 4.³⁵ Prov 20:9.³⁶ Dt 5:32; Jn 14:6.

no one of those who come 'in the name' of Christ 'saying: I am Christ, I am the truth and wisdom and the true light,'³⁷ may trick us.

And I think that not only is Christ the Word and the antichrist a pretended word, Christ the Truth and the antichrist a pretended truth, Christ the Wisdom and the antichrist a pretended wisdom³⁸ (deceiving the lovers of the Wisdom of God and the Truth, who refer all things to the rule of faith), but also among these virtues in which we live in relation to God, we discover that Christ is all the virtues and the antichrist is all the pretended virtues, because whatever they are, they are all appearances of the good that Christ has in himself in reality for the building up of human beings. The devil has all these in himself in appearance for the deception of the saints. For yes, Christ is justice, but 'there are' frequently 'ways of men that appear to be just, but their ends look into the depth of the underworld.'³⁹ Whenever, therefore, it appears to be justice although it is not true justice, such justice as that is the antichrist against Christ who is justice. And I think that the moral purity that the heretics have is the antichrist since it sends people into error so that they not understand the moral purity in the church which is Christ. So too, against Christ who is mercy, the antichrist is mercy in those who perform acts of charity but not because of the justice of God. The antichrist is also patience in those who appear indeed to suffer for Christianity and 'eagerly contend even to the shedding of blood,'⁴⁰ of course so that they not appear to deny Christianity; but they are speaking iniquity 'against the highest' even in the very act of pouring out their blood, and they set 'their mouth against heaven.'⁴¹ And it is the antichrist as power deceiving the ignorant, because many will say to Christ in that day: 'Lord, did we not cast out demons in your name, and perform many miracles?' He will respond to them: 'Depart from me, all who work iniquity, I never knew you.'⁴² For if Christ never knew them, but they boast to have performed miracles in the name of Christ, those miracles were not from Christ who did not know them, but from him who 'transforms himself' not only 'into an angel of light' but also into Christ himself.⁴³ We must, therefore, with God as our helper and Christ himself who lives in us,⁴⁴ and with our eyes wide-open, beware 'that no one', whether word or miracle, 'deceives us', whether from within or from without, putting himself forth to be Christ, when he is his enemy and the enemy of his other virtues.

Consider this too, that 'many' come in no other name than 'in my name', for the antichrist assumes only the name of Christ. He does not perform works, nor teach the words of his truth, nor display his wisdom in himself. And just as (according to some) Barabbas was also called Jesus,⁴⁵ but was a thief, having nothing of Jesus but the name so, in my opinion, there are many Christs, but

³⁷ See Jn 1:9.

³⁸ See Jn 1:1; 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24.

³⁹ Prov 16:25.

⁴⁰ See Heb 12:4.

⁴¹ Ps 72:8, 9.

⁴² Mt 7:22, 23.

⁴³ See 2 Cor 11:14.

⁴⁴ See Heb 13:6; Gal 2:20.

⁴⁵ See below, ch. 121.

in name only. And take note that in the Scriptures the Lord is never found using this particular word and saying, I am Christ, just as he does not say anything similar through the many who will come 'in' his 'name' and say, 'I am the Christ.' For the works of God that Christ alone was able to do, namely the word he taught and the miracles, were sufficient for him for the faith the believers had (that he is the Christ), over a thousand voices crying out: 'I am the Christ.'⁴⁶ And just as he never openly said, 'I am', but spoke through his works and through his pious doctrine, so he says to Peter, as to one who had never heard it from him, but had learned from the Father that he was 'the Christ the Son of the living God': 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in heaven.'⁴⁷ For if he had openly said to him while he was in the body, 'I am the Christ', flesh would appear to have revealed it to him, not so much the Father. For that reason, this statement of theirs alone, 'I am the Christ' suffices against the deception of the antichrists because Christ is never said to have said it. But those who are deceived are many, 'For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many enter through it', but they are few who find that way 'that leads to life.'⁴⁸

34 'And you will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not frightened, for these things must happen, but the end is not yet.'⁴⁹

Luke has it this way: 'When you shall hear of wars and rebellions, do not be frightened, for these things must happen first, but the end is not immediate.'⁵⁰ He sets forth two things in these words: one is, 'You will hear of wars'; and the other: 'reports of wars'. Let us observe first, in accord with the simple tradition in the way most people understand it, that 'reports of wars' are different from wars. Consider with me that 'wars' are where cities rise up against cities, or nations against nations, for one to take something away from the other, or so that the stronger may kill the strong. What, then, might 'reports of wars' mean following 'wars'? Especially because it was not said, You will see 'wars' and 'you will hear of wars', but he asserted 'you will hear' with the one and the other, that is, 'You will hear of wars' and 'you will hear reports of wars'. And let us consider what it is to hear of 'wars' because the sons of peace keep their eyes pure from wars that they might not see evil things,⁵¹ and (since they cannot look at trouble and grief) they hear about wars—what sort of city fights against what sort of city, or what sort of nation is conquered by what sort. But what will it be to hear 'reports of wars' beyond hearing of wars? See, therefore, if you can make a distinction (I mean so far as the simple meaning of the word goes) such as this: It is not the same to be situated far from a war and hear that there is a war, and to be near a war and hear the noises themselves of those fighting. Each phrase, therefore, has its own significance. And perhaps the one who hears the noises themselves which occur in wars, hears 'wars'; but the other, who hears

⁴⁶ See Jn 5:36.

⁴⁷ Mt 16:16, 17.

⁴⁸ Mt 7:13, 14.

⁴⁹ Mt 24:6.

⁵⁰ Lk 21:9.

⁵¹ See Is 33:15.

'reports of wars' hears of wars waged far away, for this person does not hear the 'wars' themselves. But since the words are ambiguous, someone can say on the contrary that the person who is far removed from wars hears of them, but the one who is near 'wars' hears 'reports of the wars' themselves. In each case, therefore, there seems to be some perceptible difference.

35 Ascend now to the moral and spiritual understanding and see if you can, in some way, discover some meaning worthy of the grandeur of the knowledge of Christ and of the precision of the evangelists, so you do not debase the dignity of the wisdom found in the Gospel. See, therefore if, recalling what we passed on above about the saying, 'Many will come in my name saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many', we can also interpret these words as their sequence. Everyone, therefore, who is perfect and sees in his soul the glorious coming of the Word that destroys the world and brings it to an end and crucifies it to the just person⁵² so that all worldly things may be dead to him, and who has his senses exercised for choosing⁵³ as he considers and examines many subjects, must of necessity encounter 'wars' of doctrines. And furthermore, he will hear many professing the truth and conflicting traditions about it. Therefore, like a good soldier of the Word let him remain unconquered in his soul by all who profess the truth but neither comprehend it nor display it but instead, proclaim things contrary to the truth as truth. In this way, he will be made worthy to receive in his soul the glorious advent of Christ as he is, God the Word, that was 'in the beginning with God', who customarily comes to those who, after they have known 'Christ according to the flesh' and received the Word that 'was made flesh', ascend to such a degree compared to most people, that they can receive not just any kind of glory, but 'the glory as of an only son from the Father'.⁵⁴

And perhaps the Word of God appears in differing glories in accordance with the power of each soul that sees it and in keeping with what each soul has shown itself capable. To the person, therefore, who has been perfected and has come, so far as possible in oneself, to the consummation of the age, the Word appears so excellent that the one who sees him says: 'We saw his glory, glory as of an only son from the Father, full of grace and truth'.⁵⁵ If, therefore, someone is to be thought worthy to receive and see so excellent a Word, it is unavoidable that he hear of 'wars' in his soul prior to a vision of this kind of Word; but others, who defend whatever has appeared to them as if it were truth, hear 'reports of wars'. Well did the Saviour add for those disciples proceeding to perfection, after he had said these things about wars, 'See', and did not say, 'Hear'. He was urging them to be careful to see with the eyes of their soul (after they have heard of 'wars' and 'reports of wars') the nature of the individual wars that were reported, and seeing it, not be frightened, since such symbolic wars usually occur in just people with conflicting opinions, and confuse and raise questions

⁵² See Gal 6:14.

⁵³ See Heb 5:14.

⁵⁴ Jn 1:2; 2 Cor 5:16; Jn 1:14.

⁵⁵ Jn 1:14.

in their souls whether things which seem likely may perhaps be true when they are false, or whether to put complete confidence in them at least as if they were true.

All, therefore, who are proceeding to the perfection that is in Christ and to the way of life of the heavenly church,⁵⁶ discipline themselves in those things that are said and investigate and reflect on the command of Christ when he says, 'See' when they hear of 'wars' of the heresies that are being fought against the true faith and with one another against themselves, and 'reports of wars' of philosophy and vain deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of this world, and not according to Christ.⁵⁷ And they see indeed what is meant, and are not deceived when they see falsehoods with the appearance of truth. Unwounded by such wars, they hope to see the glorious coming of Christ, who is the Word, especially if, in accord with the command of Christ, they hear of 'wars and reports of wars', and suffer no disturbance of soul, but are unafraid, protected by the peace of God that guards the 'hearts and thoughts' of the worthy.⁵⁸ But if someone, hearing of 'wars and reports of wars', as we have set forth their meaning, shall not be careful to see those things that are meant in diverse teachings resembling the truth, he will be frightened because he was not careful to see them. Not only will he be deceived by many who come 'in the name' of Christ and say, 'I am the Christ' but, receiving incurable wounds, he will even be killed by swords of the kind of which it is said, 'swords have wounded', whose wounds 'the tongues of the wise' usually heal.⁵⁹ And these who are troubled, and fall into war of this kind because they do not look out for themselves, are those who are wounded in the valley of Zion and die. Scripture says of them, 'Your wounded were not wounded by the sword, nor have your dead died in battle',⁶⁰ whom we must now only intimate.

But it is not the prerogative of just any person to prepare himself to hear of 'wars and reports of wars', so that when he hears, he may see and not be frightened. It is for the person who is perfect in Christ,⁶¹ who lives, indeed, in the flesh but does not wage war according to the flesh. The weapons of this soldier are not of flesh, but are powerful in God and effective to destroy the fortifications and plans of those exalting themselves against the knowledge of God.⁶² For according to Solomon, 'the wise man ascends' many 'fortified cities' of the heresies, cities fortified with an eloquence of words, and when he ascended 'he destroyed the fortification in which the impious had their confidence'.⁶³ Paul, who had been prepared 'for the destruction of cities fortified',⁶⁴ against the truth, destroyed them. After such a person shall have heard of 'wars and reports of wars' and sees and, as it were, understands, he ascends upon 'fortified cities' and destroys 'the fortifications in which the impious had their confidence',

⁵⁶ See Col 1:28; Phil 3:20.

⁵⁷ Col 2:8.

⁵⁸ See Phil 4:7.

⁵⁹ Prov 12:18.

⁶⁰ Is 22:2.

⁶¹ See Col 1:28.

⁶² See 2 Cor 10:2-5.

⁶³ Prov 21:22.

⁶⁴ See 2 Cor 10:2; Prov 21:22.

praising God and giving thanks to God (from whom he has learned to fight such 'wars'; and to comply with the command that says: 'Consecrate war').⁶⁵ He cries out and says, 'Blessed be the Lord God, who teaches my hands in battle and my fingers in war; my mercy and my refuge.'⁶⁶ For because of 'wars' of this kind, the wife of Nabal says of David, 'My lord will fight the wars of the Lord.'⁶⁷ And I think the 'wars' that are mentioned in the Scriptures are mysteries of such wars; and also mysteries of the destructions of those warring against the assembly of truth, especially those wars that are mentioned in the book of Joshua about the destruction of cities.⁶⁸ The latter are mysteries of all the assemblies of hostile powers.

Therefore, when we hear of 'wars and reports' of such 'wars', let us pay attention to what he says: 'See that you not be frightened'. And we ought to know that it is necessary that these things happen to one who is awaiting the coming of the Word, that he should hear of 'wars and reports of wars', but 'the end will not be' at the very moment he hears. It is because the person 'who shall have persevered unto the end will be saved' that everyone who wants to be saved must anticipate the end. But according to Luke, if we shall have heard of 'wars and rebellions' we should not be disturbed. The wars, indeed, are what occur from 'knowledge falsely so-called' and from the wisdom 'of the prince of this world'; but rebellions are from those not in agreement with one another in the assembly of the church.⁶⁹ For we obviously hear different opinions on various matters (especially we who wish to advance to the perfection that is in Christ). There are not only wars outside the church, but there are also rebellions within it. The disciples of the apostles were strangers to all of these, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, All of whom had 'one heart and soul';⁷⁰ for they were established 'in the same mind and in the same knowledge'.⁷¹ Let us, nevertheless, not be frightened even if we hear of wars of this sort and rebellions of that sort. For 'these things must happen first', before we may see the perfection of the wisdom that is in Christ, 'but the end' that we seek 'will not be immediate'. For we must be made firm and established in peace, so that we may be without fear and not be disturbed by rebellions, so that after these things we can reach the end which is not in the hearing of wars nor in the rebellions themselves; for the end which brings peace is far removed from all those things.

36 'For nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in various places; for all these are the beginning of woes.'⁷²

Mark has the same thing, but adds, 'and disturbances'; Luke likewise has these words but adds, 'and there will be terrible portents from heaven and

⁶⁵ Jer 6:4. ⁶⁶ Ps 143:1, 2. ⁶⁷ 1 Kgs (Sam) 25:28.

⁶⁸ See Josh 10, and Origen's homilies on Joshua.

⁶⁹ See Lk 21:9; 1 Tim 6:20; 1 Cor 2:6.

⁷⁰ Acts 4:32.

⁷¹ 1 Cor 1:10.

⁷² Mt 24:7, 8.

great signs and storms.⁷³ We will first explain the simple, physical meanings of the passage. Just as the bodies of those who do not receive vital strength from without grow feeble before their death, and the cause of the separation of the soul from its body is weakness as it is in all people, in the same way when so great a creation as the universe begins to dissipate, having a beginning, as it were, and an end (since 'the things that are seen are temporary', and because 'heaven and earth will pass away'⁷⁴) it must grow feeble prior to its dissipation, resulting in the earth frequently being shaken violently by earthquakes, and the air becoming deadly, absorbing a certain fatal force, and in addition, the vital force of the earth suddenly failing and choking its fruits, and the generative power of the trees failing in all their natural courses. Since these things occur, therefore, it follows that nature too is unstable, since it is a portion of the whole universe and must undergo changeability with all things. For example, nature is depleted and destroyed when the customary nourishment of nutrients is not renewed. For the heavens 'will perish' because 'they will wear out like a garment' 'and whatever is wearing out and growing old is near destruction'.⁷⁵ Consequently, because of the lack of food people, being greedy, are incited to wars against those who are not experiencing so great a lack. Thus, based on a comparison with others who have the things that are necessary in abundance, rebellions of some against others occur, and 'nation' fights 'against nation and kingdom against kingdom'. And it is possible that in another shortage of things even people who have good sense become needy resulting in the tranquil, peaceful life not being found in many, but rebellions, quarrels, and disturbances occurring, sometimes because of greed, but at other times because of the covetousness of the empire. At other times, they occur because of an insane desire for vain glory, sometimes even from the desire of rulers for vain glory, rulers who are not content with their own kingdom but want to extend their empire and subdue many nations to themselves.

37 And in addition someone will give a more profound reason for those things that are to happen before the consummation of the world, but especially for the wars. Just as the coming of Christ caused peace by divine power among most nations, as the prophet says of it: 'Justice will arise in his days, and an abundance of peace until the moon rises',⁷⁶ so the peace of the world was multiplied for the sake of the future growth of the churches. This resulted in that peace becoming the occasion for the salvation of multitudes during the time in which they were not compelled to march out to wars and fight for their fatherlands as used to happen long ago. Consequently it follows that when 'the love of many' shall have grown cold⁷⁷ because of the abundance of iniquity with the consequence that God and his Christ shall have left them, wars again occur, so

⁷³ See Mk 13:8; Lk 21:11.

⁷⁴ 2 Cor 4:18; Mt 24:35.

⁷⁵ Ps 101:27; Heb 8:13.

⁷⁶ Ps 71:7.

⁷⁷ See Mt 24:12.

long, of course, as the actions that produce wars are not kept in check by holiness, but rather are nurtured even more because of the excessive growth of human wickedness, so that they may be said to be the cause of all evils that occur, which have befallen the Word, but afterwards 'they all turned away and at once became useless' in the evils of this world.⁷⁸

For as long as the salts of the earth stood, to whom the Lord said, 'You are the salt of the earth,'⁷⁹ all things set up by the salts stood firm, but when the salts themselves had lost their flavour, then (as we may say in accordance with the Scripture) also those things that were salted by them lost their flavour as if unsalted. They were spoiled; they stank; and they were destroyed. And furthermore, as long as the 'light of the world' shall stand,⁸⁰ all things are set straight, regulated by its bright light. But when this light itself shall be diminished in human souls, during the time in which it is not nourished by the food that is proper and natural to it, then all things are in the darkness that covers them and all things occur in gloom and disasters as if a gathering of hostile powers lies over them. So long as these powers are not opposed by the saints and by Christ in them who customarily opposed them, they work in human hearts in darkness, as it were, without any hindrance and stir up nation 'against nation and kingdom against kingdom'. And if (as some think) 'famines and plagues' come about from actions like these and from the angels of Satan, likewise 'famines and plagues' caused by hostile powers will increase when the disciples of Christ will not be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They are the princes of the power of God, who destroy the wars that the hostile powers cause in people, along with everything sown by their malice.

At one time, indeed, 'famines and plagues' used to occur in Israel because of their sins and withered virtue. The prayers of saints such as Samuel, Jeremiah and others like these used to bring them to an end. But it has been stated well, 'There will be famines, plagues, and earthquakes in places'. For God does not wish to destroy humanity once and for all, but by judging parts in it little by little. So long as 'famines, plagues, and earthquakes' occur 'in places', he is giving a place for repentance to those who are corrected by modest corrective measures and are turned back to God. And just as those at the beginning of a sickness can bring in medical assistance, so can certain people grant a means of cleansing to those tending, on account of famine, plague, and earthquakes 'in places', towards the manner of the life, faith, and wisdom of the saints. But if a holy correction shall not have been made when evils of this kind are beginning, they advance to worse 'famines, plagues, and earthquakes' when 'the abomination of desolation' shall have a place, for unsatisfied with any other part of the world, he will come so that he may take his stand even 'in the holy place'.⁸¹

Nevertheless, rebellions of nations 'against nations and of kingdoms against kingdoms' and 'famines, plagues, and earthquakes in places' rising continuously

⁷⁸ Ps 13:3.⁷⁹ Mt 5:13.⁸⁰ Mt 5:14.⁸¹ See Mt 24:15.

are said to be the 'beginning' of worse calamities which the Lord called 'woes'. If, therefore, such things as these shall be the 'first fruits of woes' of what sort do you think the increase of woes will be? And also, what sort of end will there be of the general 'woes' in the whole world, so that they will no longer destroy parts but the entire world? Nevertheless, I think that the things that are to follow will affect only the impious, so that they may be tormented with the most acute and long-lasting woes until they put off the seeds of the sins from hostile operations that they have conceived and fashioned. Pharaoh indeed, with no desire to do good, ordered that any male whatsoever born to the Hebrews be thrown into the river.⁸² The good God, however, as truly good,⁸³ put to death the seeds of the evils that the Hebrews received, so that by many toils and pains they might put them aside, because they had conceived pain and given birth to iniquity.⁸⁴ And what else is fitting for God than to destroy every iniquity that sins produce? For sins of this kind, the day of death is better than the day of birth, according to what is written, 'The day of death is better than the day of birth.'⁸⁵ So too, a miscarriage is better than that which is born, as someone well says, 'And I said, A miscarriage is better than he, for' a miscarriage of this kind 'comes in vanity and walks in darkness, and its name is covered in darkness.'⁸⁶ We have treated these matters rather fully, surveying them in sequence in relation to the statement, 'All these things are the beginnings of woes.'

38 But since I think there is also a moral meaning in this passage, I must subsequently say the following here in view of what I have said. If anyone shall have seen the glorious and royal form of the Word and his glorious coming, he must be called upon not only to hear of 'wars and reports' of intellectual 'wars', so that when he sees he may learn not to be frightened at all, but he must also learn not to be frightened should he see a nation of any kind of falsehoods and a tumult of words alluring to another faction rising up 'against' some other 'nation' of falsehoods, because there is never a peaceful end to nations of this kind. Something we frequently see happening among heresies and assemblies of the wicked⁸⁷ is a nation of one heresy rising 'against a nation' of another heresy. In the same way also the 'kingdom' of some word rises up 'against the kingdom' of another straying word, because Satan, and every lie, is always divided against himself and, for that reason cannot stand.⁸⁸ The person, therefore, who sets out to see the glory of Christ and the kingdom, that is, the perfection of the Word and the kingdom that he rules and holds lordship over, placing all contrary words under his feet and the treading of his feet, must of necessity⁸⁹ frequently experience the inadequacy of the senses for the examination of those things which he seeks, as he seeks the truth by which the soul is properly nourished. And just as formerly those who were setting out for the

⁸² See Ex 1:22.⁸³ See Mt 19:17.⁸⁴ See Ps 7:15.⁸⁵ Eccl 7:1.⁸⁶ Eccl 6:3, 4.⁸⁷ See Ps 2:17 (Vulg).⁸⁸ See Mt 12:26.⁸⁹ See Lk 20:43; Ps 109:1.

land of promise were afflicted and suffered a famine of physical food so great that they received manna from heaven,⁹⁰ so must the one who is to be nurtured on the perfection of the Word frequently be tempted by the inadequacy of the senses and suffer nothing from it. And we see this very thing in ourselves every day when we seek some sense of the truth in the Scriptures. Before we discover what we are seeking we experience an inadequacy of the senses until this kind of inadequacy of the senses in us is solved by God who gives 'food' to the worthy 'at the right time' to be eaten, and clothing to be worn.⁹¹

It is also necessary that he who will see the glorious advent, that is the advent of wisdom in his own soul, see 'plagues' of morbid words and suffer nothing from them. They are all destructive words uttered by destructive people who speak 'iniquity against the height' and set 'their mouth against heaven' in pride and making great promises.⁹² Take, for example, the words of Marcion against the creator of the world. His impious blasphemies are like 'plagues' of souls, perverting the minds of people and making their souls sick in their worship of errors. There are also the fables of Valentinus about masculine and feminine aeons and about the birth of the creator of the world, a story they concoct from false wisdom, and whatever other fables they go on about. They are nothing other than 'plagues'. Then there are the words of Basilides, which disparage those who struggle even to death for the truth to confess Jesus 'before men',⁹³ but teach that denying or sacrificing to foreign gods makes no difference. These words, no less, stink and pervert those who hear them. They teach, in these same words, that there are no other punishments for sins except the metempsychosis of souls after death. For passing over the fact that what they say is clearly false, they furthermore remove a beneficial fear from people and nourish the temerity of the impiety of those who would keep themselves from a multitude of sins because of the fear of future punishments. Therefore, there will be many 'famines and plagues' for all who wish to see the glorious advent of Christ in their soul. But nothing will harm them, for they will only see them; they will suffer nothing from them. But they will experience also their 'rebellions', things that are looked for in numerous passages of the Scriptures that contain what looks like a contradiction or false stories, but soon they will suffer nothing, nor will the rebellions of false reports snatch them away from the expectation of the glorious, divine, perfect advent of Jesus Christ, the Word. And he who will say: 'From fear of you, Lord, we conceived in the womb and were in labour, and we brought forth the wind of salvation which you have made on the earth' or, in accordance with what has been said, 'My children, for whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you',⁹⁴ must especially grow up in all those woes, 'of famine, plagues, and rebellions', enduring which he will bring forth what he has conceived and formed in himself, Christ the

⁹⁰ See Ex 16:1–4; Jn 6:31.

⁹¹ See Ps 144:15; Mt 6:25–32.

⁹² See Ps 72:8, 9.

⁹³ Mt 10:32.

⁹⁴ Is 26:18; Gal 4:19.

Word, so that he may say at his birth, 'Behold, I bring you good news of great joy', and 'Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth'.⁹⁵

39 'Then they will deliver you to tribulations and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. And at that time many will be made to stumble, and they will hand one another over and hate one another; and many false prophets will arise and lead many astray; and because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who shall have remained to the end will be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come'.⁹⁶

This text is clear on its own without any explanation because the disciples of Christ have often been delivered 'to tribulations' and killed because of the Word and 'hated by the nations' because of Christ. But if someone wants to discuss what the phrase, 'by all nations', means he will discover nothing very definite because the people of Christ will be hated 'by all nations' dwelling even in the furthest parts of the earth, unless perhaps someone should say that 'by all' has been substituted for 'by many' here to exaggerate the numbers. But if someone asks you what the phrase 'Then they will deliver you' means, you will find something to discuss. For it is not after 'nation' shall have risen up 'against nation and kingdom against kingdom', and after 'famines and plagues in places'⁹⁷ that they then are delivered 'to tribulations' and killed and 'hated by all nations because of the name' of Christ; for even before these things happen Christians have been delivered 'to tribulations' and, because they give testimony to the truth, they have been killed and 'hated by all nations' with whom they have lived.

But in response to this inquiry, the person who wants to understand it according to the letter will answer that when 'nation' shall have risen up 'against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and famines and plagues and earthquakes occur in places',⁹⁸ then, especially, Christians are handed over 'to tribulations' as never before, and at that time as never before they are to be 'hated' especially by all the nations that dwell with them, and they will suffer all things 'because of the name' of Christ. For people experiencing catastrophes love to discover something that they might say by discussing their causes. When, therefore, these things befall the world, they say consequently, as if it is because people are forsaking the worship of the gods, that the multitude of Christians is the cause of the wars, famines, and plagues which occur. For often the Gentiles, and anyone who smacks of Gentile things, blame Christians for a famine, but they also lay the reason for plagues on the church of Christ. Now we know that in our time there was an earthquake in some places and that some catastrophes occurred. Consequently, those outside the faith and impious blamed Christians for the earthquake. Because of this, churches were

⁹⁵ Lk 2:10, 14.

⁹⁶ Mt 24:9-14.

⁹⁷ Mt 24:7.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

persecuted and burned. But even more than this, people who appeared to be sensible made public statements to the effect that the most serious earthquakes occur because of Christians.

But someone will be able to save the statement, 'and you will be hated by all nations because of my name', as follows: never, indeed, have all nations agreed as one against Christians. But once the things Christ predicted happened then, as if they have all been inflamed by certain nations undertaking to blame Christians, the result is persecutions against the people of God everywhere in general and no longer piecemeal as previously. 'Then', that saying comes about, that 'many' are made to stumble who appeared to stand firm in the faith, and 'one will deliver another', and there will be hatred among those even who appear to be faithful. Then 'many false prophets will arise' deceiving a multitude of those who lack good sense; then also, when 'love grows cold', not only among the unfaithful but even in the faithful themselves, and the fervour of love grows cold because of the numerous iniquities, consequently only a few remain struggling for the truth 'unto the end', who also are to be saved. And when things have come to this state, the 'Gospel', which previously had not been preached 'in the entire world' (for many people, not only barbarians but even people of our nations, have not yet heard the Christian message), at that time 'will be preached', so that every nation may hear the preaching of the Gospel and no one be left out, who has not heard. 'Then will be the end' of the age.

But if these things are so, we will no longer be ignorant of his statement, 'Then they will deliver you', nor will we distrust as false his statement, 'And you will be hated by all nations because of my name'. And although his statement 'Then many will be made to stumble and they will hand one another over' has not yet happened, we say that the truth of this word has not yet been fulfilled. For not yet have there been many betrayers of the church, and not yet have many 'false prophets' appeared deceiving 'many'. So too, not yet have they been 'hated' by 'all races' 'because of the name' of Christ, even by those inhabiting the utmost parts of the earth, so also not yet has the 'Gospel of the kingdom' been preached 'in all the world'. The 'Gospel', therefore, is not said to have been preached to all the Ethiopians, especially to those who are beyond the river,⁹⁹ and not to the Chinese¹⁰⁰ nor to the Ariacin, nor have the ***¹⁰¹ heard the Christian message. And what should we say of the Britons or the Germans, who are around the Ocean, or the barbarian Dacians, Sarmatians, and Scythians, most of whom have not yet heard the word of the Gospel, but they are to hear at the consummation of the age? For take note of what he says: 'And this

⁹⁹ See Zeph 3:10.

¹⁰⁰ Lucan, the first-century CE Latin poet, made them neighbours to the Ethiopians (*Bellum Civile* 10.292-3).

¹⁰¹ Koetschau thinks another people name has dropped out here.

Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the entire world for testimony to all the nations, and then will be the end'. But if someone wishes to remark casually that 'the Gospel of the kingdom' has already been preached 'in the entire world for testimony to all the nations', it will be possible consequently to say to him that the end has already come because Jesus said, 'then will be the end'. This is an extremely rash statement made by a person who lacks understanding. In respect to these matters Paul says to the Thessalonians in the second letter, 'Let no one deceive you in any way (as if the day of the Lord were at hand); because unless a revolt shall come first, and the man of sin shall have been revealed, the son of destruction (and other things), it will not be the day of the Lord.'¹⁰²

We have explained these words in accord with the simple tradition. But if we ought to understand a moral explanation here as well in accordance with what we proposed above in a moral sense, we will set forth the following: the person who will see the second advent of the Word of God, that glorious advent in his own soul, must, according to the extent of his progress towards the perfection of the Word, experience ambushes from opposing operations as if he were a great athlete handed over to tribulations and abandoned.

For 'many are the tribulations of the just',¹⁰³ and the more just someone wishes to become, the more narrow and afflicted with desire is the way¹⁰⁴ he encounters as he walks in tribulations and, afflicted, he is dead to the world; and the more he proceeds to a clearer vision of the Word, (because Christ is found more perfectly in him) the more he is hated by all who hate Christ, not so much by 'all the nations' in the flesh, as by 'the nations' of spiritual wickedness.¹⁰⁵ For the manifestation of the properties of Christ that has been implanted in him, because of which he is also called a Christian, makes him hated 'by all' who have the spirit of the world as he strives ever more and more for the perfection of Christ.¹⁰⁶

But also in discussions and questions there will be a few who are untouched as they encounter the truth more completely. But more 'will be made to stumble' and fall from it, made traitors and accusers against 'one or the other' because of disagreement over doctrines of the truth, which not all can apprehend, and this becomes the reason 'they hate one another'. And when questions of this kind reach more, there will be many indeed handing on, without understanding, a discourse about the future and how it is not necessary to interpret the prophets. One will not err to call these 'false prophets' who deceive 'many', but there will be very few investigating the truth. But doctrines false by design do not weaken the strength of the truth. Those with itching ears will multiply them¹⁰⁷ to their delight, speaking 'iniquity' contrary to the law. And the contrary words of many who are teaching will be so harmful that they

¹⁰² 2 Thess 2:2, 3.¹⁰³ Ps 33:20.¹⁰⁴ See Mt 7:14.¹⁰⁵ See Gal 6:14; Col 1:28; Eph 6:12.¹⁰⁶ See Eph 6:12; 1 Cor 2:12.¹⁰⁷ See 2 Tim 4:3, 4.

will cause even fervent love (that existed previously in simplicity of faith) 'to grow cold' in the supposition of grasping divine mysteries and the truth. But the person who shall have been able, when he sees all these things, to remain in the first presentation of the apostolic tradition and ecclesiastical instruction will 'be saved', and so the 'Gospel' will have been preached in the souls of all 'for testimony to all nations', that is to all the unbelieving thoughts of all souls.

40 'When you shall have seen the abomination of desolation, which is written in the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, let the one who reads understand'.¹⁰⁸

These are the words spoken by the prophet about the future abomination of desolation: 'And he will ratify a covenant with many for one week, and in the middle of the week sacrifice and libation will be removed and there will be an abomination of desolation over the temple and up to the consummation of time; a consummation will be given with regard to the desolation'.¹⁰⁹ There is truly no one who can understand the words of Daniel other than the Holy Spirit who was in Daniel, that he might clarify every word about the week and the things he said about the abomination of desolation.¹¹⁰ But if we must set forth a few things about this passage in accordance with what seems right to us, it must be said that the language appears to indicate the seventy years following the advent of our Saviour. For this week, called a week because of the seven decades of years, ratified a covenant with many when the apostles of Christ were illuminated by God in all knowledge of the intention of the divine Scriptures from the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension, by giving attention both to prayer and to the word.¹¹¹ But in the middle of the week, that is in three and a half decades of years the sacrifice of the altar was removed, that is, in thirty-five years what had been written was fulfilled: 'In the middle of the week sacrifice and libation will be removed'. But at that time also the abomination of desolation of the temple and the city was upon the temple that was in Jerusalem, at that time, of course, 'when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by an army', so that (as the Saviour had prophesied) they might know 'that its desolation was at hand'.¹¹² And the prophet says that this abomination of desolation on the temple when Jerusalem was surrounded by an army remains 'until the time of the consummation' so that the consummation of the world occurs at the time of the desolation of Jerusalem and of the temple that is in it. And where are those 'who say they are Jews and are not',¹¹³ who say that the Jerusalem that is below will be built before the consummation of the age? And he says that 'a consummation will be given at the desolation'. But if the temple is also built, it will be built by him 'who is in opposition and is exalted over everything that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he may sit in a temple' of this kind, 'displaying himself as if he were God', 'whom the Lord Jesus will

¹⁰⁸ Mt 24:15.

¹⁰⁹ Dan 9:27 (Theodotion).

¹¹⁰ See 1 Cor 2:10-12.

¹¹¹ See Acts 1:14.

¹¹² Lk 21:20.

¹¹³ Rev 2:9.

kill with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the illumination of his advent.¹¹⁴ Or if, then, it should be agreeable to some people that this Jerusalem be built on the earth, nevertheless the statement, 'the consummation is to be given with regard to its desolation', will not be false.

But if we must also say something about the times, we say that in the *Chronicles* of a certain Phlegon it is said (if, moreover, we ought to accept this document as telling the truth about the temple) that the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple in it occurred about the fortieth year from the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar. Subtract, then, the approximately three years of the preaching of the Lord and the time of his resurrection, when 'for forty days he appeared to them' and was teaching 'them about the kingdom of God',¹¹⁵ and you will discover perhaps that the statement, 'My sacrifice and libation will be removed', was fulfilled in about half 'a week', more or less, (computing by decades of years). At that time 'the abomination of desolation' also occurred 'over the temple', and the desolation will remain until the time of the consummation, for the 'consummation', as we have said, 'will be given at the desolation'. But if such a tradition 'of weeks' is known to us who say (so far as the saying goes) that what was said has been fulfilled includes not only the statement, 'My sacrifice and libation will be removed', but also that which is written, that the abomination of desolation is related to the temple, without doubt the advent of Christ is also clearly disclosed in the words of Daniel the prophet. He says, 'The seventy weeks have been cut short for your people and for the holy city, that sin might be consumed and sealed, and iniquities blotted out, and that eternal justice might be achieved, and that the vision and the prophet might be sealed, and the holy of holies anointed. And you will know and understand from the going forth of the word to respond and to build Jerusalem up to Christ the ruler, a period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; and it will be transformed and street and wall will be rebuilt, and times will be abolished. And after the sixty-two weeks, the anointing will perish and there is no judgment in it; and he will destroy the city and the sanctuary with the ruler who comes, and they will be cut off in a flood; and there will be destruction until the end of a brief war. And he will ratify a covenant with many for one week; and in half a week my sacrifice and libation will be removed and the pinnacles from the destruction up to the consummation of hastening'.¹¹⁶

Now I think that the seventy weeks that were cut short 'for the people and for the holy city so that sin might be consumed' are the four-thousand-nine-hundred years from Adam up to the seventy years that followed the dispensation of Christ. For the sin of the people was consumed, for which reason it was also forsaken by God.¹¹⁷ And their sin, indeed, was sealed and the injustice of the believers was blotted out and after its blotting out eternal life was brought

¹¹⁴ 2 Thess 2:4, 8.

¹¹⁷ See Mt 23:38.

¹¹⁵ Acts 1:3.

¹¹⁶ Dan 9:24-7 (Theodotion).

in Christ. But I think the reason for the saying that the vision and the prophet are sealed is 'because the law and the prophets were up to the time of John' who reveals Christ.¹¹⁸ For since there were by no means visions in prophets after John, therefore, the vision was sealed, and the prophet. But when the vision was sealed and the prophet, the only-begotten Christ, the holy of holies, was anointed. The prophets and Daniel knew this anointed Christ, and they understood the phrase, 'from the going forth of the word' in another way, namely when 'the heavens were made firm by the word of the Lord'.¹¹⁹ And 'from the going forth of the word to respond' in the saints who existed from the beginning and in the prophets of the Lord, but also 'sixty-two weeks' will elapse 'to build Jerusalem, up to Christ the ruler': this is the first indeed of the four-hundred-and-ninety years that become seven weeks, computed by decades, but after this four-thousand-three-hundred-forty years which become, likewise computed by decades, sixty-two weeks. After these, Christ has returned and built the street in which wisdom 'goes with confidence' and the wall at whose top she 'is proclaimed'.¹²⁰ And the 'times' of the people have been abolished, for which reason the anointing that was in the temple was removed from the people so that now there is no judgement among them, and over and above the seven weeks, sixty-two weeks were added. But both the city and the sanctuary were destroyed when later a leader for that people, either Herod or Agrippa (for the History of the Jews says it is this man¹²¹) comes on the scene.

But see that you do not think that the phrase, to be destroyed 'with the ruler who comes', is referring to Christ, for where he wishes ruler to be understood as Christ, Daniel has used both names, saying, 'up to Christ the ruler', but when he is silent about the name Christ, he is introducing the ruler who is to be destroyed, because the ruler after Christ failed and 'a ruler from his thighs', and he 'for whom they had been stored up' comes.¹²² After him the people were cut off 'by a flood' 'until the end of a shortened war' against¹²³ them. But when these things happened to them, God ratified 'a covenant with many' in one week. In the middle of this week he made incense, sacrifice, and the temple cease (which I think he means by the pinnacle¹²⁴) to be destroyed in haste 'until the consummation', when their house has been abandoned to them for their sins. Now we have explained what follows in the text of Daniel as we were able. And we have examined all these words of Daniel to juxtapose them to the interpretation of the text of the Gospel, so that we may make clear the statement, 'When you shall see the abomination of desolation that is

¹¹⁸ See Mt 11:13; Jn 1:36. ¹¹⁹ Ps 32:6. ¹²⁰ See Prov 1:20, 21.

¹²¹ The reference is probably to Josephus. ¹²² Gn 49:10.

¹²³ Latin 'super', which, I think, the translator is using to translate the Greek preposition *epi*, which means 'upon' or 'over', as 'super' does, but which can, when used with an accusative case, also mean 'against'.

¹²⁴ This word seems to have been a part of the text of Dan 9:27 that Origen used. See the quotation at n. 109 above.

mentioned by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, which let the reader understand'.¹²⁵

41 But now let us explain the text of the Gospel. We said that the 'abomination of desolation' standing 'in the holy place' is the prince who surrounded Jerusalem with an army. And so, because such terrible things happened to those who were in Judaea at that time, therefore the Lord, prophesying these future events, says to the people, 'Let those who are in Judaea at that time flee to the mountains.' And the things that happened at that time were so bad that we say that the person who was 'on the roof of the house' would not have had time to descend and 'take anything from his house,' and the one 'who was in the field' would not have been able to return to the city and 'take his garment.' And there was no time then for mercy, not even for the pregnant, nursing mothers, or their infants. Therefore, he says (I mean so far as the literal sense goes): 'Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days.'¹²⁶ And as if speaking to Jews who thought it not lawful on the Sabbath to be active or walk more than a Sabbath day's journey, he says: 'And pray that your flight not occur in winter or on the Sabbath,'¹²⁷ for it was extremely difficult to seek safety by flight not only on 'the Sabbath,' but also in 'winter.'

And it is related by those who have written a Jewish history about the things that happened at that time, that the people suffered a 'great tribulation such as had never occurred from the beginning of the world up to' the time of Christ.¹²⁸ But it was not possible that such terrible things as happened to them occur later, because they had dared to lay hands on the true Christ of God whose mystery and name David venerated and said of Saul when he was persecuting him and wanting to kill him, 'I will not lift my hands against the Christ of the Lord'.¹²⁹ But we understand the future cutting off of those days to be the shortening of those days 'because of the elect' of God who believe in Christ.¹³⁰ And at that time when the people were experiencing great calamities and the elect in Judaea were suffering dangers, many deceivers were saying: 'Behold, Here is the Christ; behold there.'¹³¹ Jesus, teaching his disciples to watch out for such people, said, 'If at that time someone shall say to you, Behold here is the Christ; behold there, do not believe them; for false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and portents.'¹³² And someone can mention Simon Magus who used to claim to be the great power of God,¹³³ or anyone like him, who wanted 'to deceive, if possible, even the elect'.¹³⁴ We have spoken of these matters in anticipation, not adding in this place any exposition beyond that which is according to the letter for the sake of those who are pleased with the simple narrative in order to speak of those things that seem to be useful for them, because the Lord set forth these future events prophesying as a diviner of the truth.

¹²⁵ Mt 24:15.¹²⁶ Mt 24:19.¹²⁷ Mt 24:20; see Acts 1:12.¹²⁸ Mt 24:21.¹²⁹ 1 Kgs (Sam) 24:11.¹³⁰ Mt 24:22.¹³¹ Mt 24:23.¹³² Mt 24:23, 24.¹³³ See Acts 8:9-11.¹³⁴ Mt 24:24.

42 But if it is necessary for the sake of those who wish and can ascend to higher levels in our discourse, let us repeat from the beginning the words of the Gospel which have been set forth and, as we are able, expound the same words again in a spiritual sense.¹³⁵ First, let us take up the word about the abomination 'of desolation' standing 'in the holy place'. The reader ought to be diligent and have understanding, so that he is not misled by the abomination 'of desolation'. The holy place, therefore, is every symbolic saying in the divine Scripture that the holy prophets who were from long ago have spoken, Moses and the others after him, and not only that, but also an utterance of the evangelists or of the apostles of Jesus Christ. 'In' this 'holy place', therefore, of all the Scriptures, the Old Testament as well as the New, antichrist, that is false teaching, frequently stands and on the basis of the fact that he is seen to stand in the divine Scriptures he displays himself as if he were God and as if he were himself Christ, the Word of God, and he is indeed the abomination 'of desolation'.¹³⁶ For it is often possible to see this 'abomination of desolation' in impious statements of doctrines among heresies, that is the antichrist as a false teaching, an 'abomination' making every person desolate of God. Whoever receives it into himself becomes 'an abomination' opposing the truth and exalting himself over every teaching that is extraneous to it, because he is proclaimed to be the Word of God, exalting himself also over everything that each and every human being wants to honour, whether truly or falsely (for every heresy is opposed not only to the truth, but also to other doctrines that are likewise false). And since he is exalted so that he does not even sit in the temple of the Scriptures, he wishes to show himself to be truly God the Word by means of the temple itself, that is by means of the Scriptures themselves.

Therefore, let the reader of the divine Scriptures always understand them, especially whenever he sees the 'abomination of desolation' (as we have described him) 'stand in' that 'holy place' of the holy Scriptures that we have explained.¹³⁷ And the person who will have understood him will destroy him with the true tradition, that is 'with the illumination of the advent' of Christ who is the truth.¹³⁸ And understanding that word that appears to stand 'in' the alien 'holy place' as the 'abomination of desolation', he will void it and cast it out of 'the holy place' in which it appears to stand. But especially Christ, who is said in it to be the true light,¹³⁹ will destroy him. And that Christ, if he is said

¹³⁵ Greek fragment: And since the word also needs an anagogical meaning...

¹³⁶ Greek fragment: (The abomination of desolation) in the anagogical sense is the heterodox teaching and the false doctrine introduced from the words of Scripture that the heterodox use. And the expression 'standing' reveals that the Antichrist, as an argument, wishes to confirm his own doctrines by fabrications.

¹³⁷ Greek fragment: It is always [especially] necessary, therefore, that the reader be diligent to understand the Scriptures, <especially> when a doctrine obviously for the desolation of the soul lies before him (bringing the soul into desolation, and the rest).

¹³⁸ 2 Thess 2:8; Jn 14:6.

¹³⁹ See Jn 1:9.

to be in anyone who wishes to hear and be helped, is not infirm,¹⁴⁰ but 'he will kill' every false word, which is the abomination 'of desolation' standing 'in the holy place' and sitting in the temple of God (which is the antichrist) 'with the breath of his mouth' for the sake of those who present themselves as capable of receiving him.¹⁴¹ This false word often does not stand, but even sits in the temple, when it appears rational, as it were, and well ordered. But they who perceive this 'abomination of desolation' so that they can say of it: 'For we are not ignorant of his craftiness,'¹⁴² understand what things are true while they read and may flee what is false and withdraw where it is not possible that they embrace a lie.

It is not possible that they who flee from the 'Judaea' of the letter 'to' spiritual and symbolic things, and to the sublime 'mountains' of the truth embrace a lie.¹⁴³ But, so that we may understand the words, 'Let them flee to the mountains', take as an example what is said clearly about a laudable flight, such as the apostle's words, 'Flee fornication', and those of Wisdom, 'Flee sin as from the face of a snake', or such as what Rebecca says mysteriously to Jacob: 'Now, therefore, my son, listen to my voice and get up and flee to Laban my brother in Haran; and live with him for some days, until your brother's anger is averted.'¹⁴⁴ And everyone (I think) who is a son of Jacob, and completes Jacob's works, and understands every custom odious to God, which is Esau, understands and flees, as it were. But if he should not flee him, he is a fornicator and defiled like Esau, and not fleeing Esau, as it were, but living with him, he does not become a son of Jacob, who had fled Esau. But Jacob lived with Laban in a way that was advantageous for himself and the dispensation which was in accordance with God. 'He concealed his heart from the Syrian that he not announce to him that he was fleeing', and he himself 'and all that was his' fled.¹⁴⁵ It is good, therefore, to flee from Laban too, a counsellor of fleshly properties. One who dwells among these ought not to remain in them, but should flee with his whole house. For even if Laban wished to pursue him, God turned him away from those fleeing him, so that, even if he capture him sometime later, he could do nothing bad to him who confidently spoke up and said, 'With whomever you discover your gods, may that person not live in the sight of our brothers. Identify what is yours with me, and take it', for nothing of Laban's things could be identified with Jacob.¹⁴⁶

In these Gospel words that we are treating at present, it is enjoined that those who recognize 'the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place', understand while they read, so that they may flee 'to the mountains'. The person, therefore, who is considered settled in such a 'Judaea' as we described, that is 'the oldness of the letter',¹⁴⁷ should flee 'to the mountains' of spiritual

¹⁴⁰ 2 Cor 13:3.¹⁴¹ 2 Thess 2:4, 8.¹⁴² 2 Cor 2:11.¹⁴³ See Mt 24:16.¹⁴⁴ 1 Cor 6:18; Sir 21:2; Gn 27:42-5.¹⁴⁵ Gn 31:20, 21.¹⁴⁶ Gn 31:22.¹⁴⁷ See Rom 7:6.

newness. And if someone shall have been found to have ascended 'upon the roof' of the word and to stand at the summit of its edification, let him 'not descend' from there on the pretext 'to remove something from his house'; for if he remains on the roof and abstains from 'descending' at any time, he will need nothing. And if anyone shall be 'in the field'—whether in that in which a treasure has been hidden as the Lord says in a certain parable,¹⁴⁸ or was full, such as that field of Jacob, to which his father compared him when he blessed him and said, 'Behold the smell of my son is like the smell of a full field that the Lord has blessed',¹⁴⁹ in which field everyone who has lived according to the law is blessed in accordance with the spiritual blessings of the law—let him who, therefore, is 'in' such a 'field' of a complete planting 'which the heavenly Father planted',¹⁵⁰ 'not turn back'. For not only is he 'who puts his hand to the plough and turns back not fit for the kingdom of God',¹⁵¹ but also, he who is 'in the field', which we have explained, and shall have turned 'back' for the sake of those things that he ought to forget. Undoubtedly, he will encounter the 'abomination of desolation', that is, the deception of false teaching; and especially if he has stripped himself of 'his' old 'garment', that is, 'the old man with his actions',¹⁵² and shall have turned 'back' again 'to take his garment'. Therefore, we ought to pay attention diligently lest we should wish to go down and 'take' any of those things that are below and are in 'the house', or leave the field and turn 'back' to seek again a 'garment' left behind when we ought 'to seek those things that are before, and forget those that are behind',¹⁵³ and not stop in any region there, but on the mountain of salvation, so that we not be caught with those who were burned up because they were caught in Sodom.¹⁵⁴

43 'But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days'.¹⁵⁵

The prophet has shown that there are also some souls that conceive descendants when he says, 'From fear of you, Lord, we have conceived in the womb, we have suffered labour, and we have given birth to the spirit of salvation that you have made on the earth'.¹⁵⁶ For just as the seed is formed and fashioned in 'those who are pregnant', so to in a soul that has received the Word, the concept of the Word is gradually formed and fashioned in it. And this I think is what Paul says to the Galatians, 'My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you',¹⁵⁷ because it is as if he had said, Until the Word be formed and made manifest in you. He says the same thing in the epistle to Timothy, that a woman is to be saved 'by the bearing of children, if she remains in the faith, and in love and holiness with purity'.¹⁵⁸ But who is this woman if not the soul that conceives the Word of God and truth, and gives birth to good

¹⁴⁸ See Mt 13:44.

¹⁴⁹ Gn 27:27.

¹⁵⁰ See Mt 15:13.

¹⁵¹ Lk 9:62.

¹⁵² Col 3:9. Greek fragment: Putting off the old man (for this, he says, is the garment).

¹⁵³ See Phil 3:13.

¹⁵⁴ See Gn 19:17.

¹⁵⁵ Mt 24:19.

¹⁵⁶ Is 26:18.

¹⁵⁷ Gal 4:19.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Tim 2:15.

works like Christ? It is irrational to think that the saying is about a bearing perceptible to the senses: 'The woman was deceived in the transgression, but she will be saved by the bearing of children, if she remains in faith, love, and holiness with purity'.¹⁵⁹ Souls, therefore, that have recently received the Word and are still pregnant and have not yet borne fruit in it, having the Word in the womb symbolically, cannot hold out against a word adverse to the truth 'standing in the holy place', nor can they stand so that they are not deceived by his opinions. Therefore, if a soul that has the Word in the womb, and has not yet borne fruit from the Word, shall see 'the abomination of desolation' (as we have explained it) 'standing in the holy place', it will encounter that 'woe' that the Lord mentioned: 'Woe to those who are pregnant'; for it will miscarry and be emptied of the hope that is in the impulses of the truth.

But even if a word should appear to be formed and bearing fruit, but it is insufficiently nourished with nutrients that cause growth and make it large, it will have remained immature, like those sucking milk; and what comes upon those sucking will come upon offspring of this kind. But if it is written (as in many copies), 'Woe to those sucking', it must be said that they are souls that are still sucking milk, to whom the apostle says: 'I gave you milk as a drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able, but you are still not able, for you are still of the flesh'.¹⁶⁰ And he also says elsewhere, 'You have become those who have need of milk, and not solid food. For everyone who is fed milk is inexperienced in the word of justice, for he is a little child'.¹⁶¹ Those, therefore, are the souls that cannot continue without being deceived in the presence of the abomination of desolation standing 'in the holy place' because they are weak and are easily deceived; for once deceived, they agree with him that he is God. And you can see the churches of the heretics full of people wailing who 'are pregnant' or 'nursing' or 'sucking'. For the majority of souls who were pregnant in the church, or nursing, or sucking and were deceived by the abomination of desolation and deceived by that false teaching that stands 'in the holy place' by means of a false tradition of perverse doctrines, have received that 'woe' of that abomination mentioned by the Lord, 'Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing', and not at just any time, but in the days of that abomination of desolation. For everyone who listens to the words of those who speak 'iniquity against the highest'¹⁶² and receives them in his days has been subjected to the abomination of desolation.

44 'But pray that your flight not occur in winter or on the Sabbath'.¹⁶³

For there is, as we said, a certain 'flight' of people that is in accord with a commandment of the Word, so that the person who flees the things he ought to flee is better than the one who does not flee and, consequently, the latter offends in so many greater ways because he does not flee but subjects himself

¹⁵⁹ 1 Tim 2:14, 15.

¹⁶⁰ 1 Cor 3:2, 3.

¹⁶¹ Heb 5:12, 13.

¹⁶² Ps 72:8.

¹⁶³ Mt 24:20.

to evils that destroy his soul. And when the apostle says, 'Flee fornication,' he is clearly teaching that there is a 'flight' appointed as worthy of praise.¹⁶⁴ And he flees fornication who avoids every occasion that excites and provokes to committing fornication, and (so far as possible) he does not join in with youths in youthful tales lest he perhaps be consumed by them, nor does he descend to the customs of such as those, but turns away completely from the violent passions of such people. Let the person who wishes to flee fornication also hear these words: 'Do not be a constant companion of a harpist, lest you be consumed by your burning desires for her.'¹⁶⁵ And he flees fornication more completely who, so far as he is able, avoids foods that inflame and excite the seed. And, if possible, he does not use wine until the more impetuous period of life is past; but if he does use it, let him do so moderately in accordance with the precept of the apostle who says, 'Timothy, do not now drink water, but use wine moderately because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.'¹⁶⁶ And what more is there? He who flees fornication is the one who is also always involved in that praise-worthy flight that prevents one from fleeing from God. And he who is resolute to flee fornication is involved in this flight. And we must not only flee fornication, but also every sin. Well, therefore, has the Scripture said, 'Flee sin like the face of a snake.'¹⁶⁷ And it is frequently appropriate to flee the word of the antichrist and 'knowledge falsely named,'¹⁶⁸ especially when a person is not yet so capable that he has the Lord working in himself¹⁶⁹ who destroys the persuasiveness of lies 'with the breath of his mouth,'¹⁷⁰ nor does he ascend to so great a height that he has in himself him who, 'by the illumination of his advent,' destroys every one possessing a persuasive likeness to the truth and making himself like the truth.

And the person who flees also ought to know the place to which he should flee, and to pray concerning the time, so that he not flee in that time that is hostile to flight. The mountains will be the places for those fleeing. Christ indicates this when he says, 'Then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains.'¹⁷¹ And let the person who flees to those mountains say the following Psalm of Ascents: 'I lifted my eyes to the mountains, from where my help will come.'¹⁷² And he lifts his eyes to the mountains because he knows the abundance that is in those mountains, which is why he says, 'His foundations are on the holy mountains.'¹⁷³ And if he shall have fled to those mountains that the Lord commanded, he will come to a holy place, and when he is there and sees that great vision, he will repeat the words, 'I will go over and see this great vision.'¹⁷⁴ And let this kind of person hear the words, 'Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'¹⁷⁵ Therefore, let those who flee in accordance with the command of God 'flee to

¹⁶⁴ 1 Cor 6:18.¹⁶⁵ Sir 9:4.¹⁶⁶ 1 Tim 5:23.¹⁶⁷ Sir 21:2.¹⁶⁸ 1 Tim 6:20.¹⁶⁹ See Col 1:29.¹⁷⁰ 2 Thess 2:8.¹⁷¹ Mt 24:16.¹⁷² Ps 120:1.¹⁷³ Ps 86:1.¹⁷⁴ Ex 3:3.¹⁷⁵ Ex 3:5.

the mountains.¹⁷⁶ Since, then, souls that have attained tranquillity are able to achieve the flight of salvation, but they run into those whom they are fleeing when 'winter' seizes them, let them pray that their 'flight not occur in winter or on the Sabbath'. This is true when Christ watches over them, but if he shall sleep, then 'the storm of wind' descending 'on the lake' will descend on the person who is fleeing, because Jesus is not fleeing with him and showing him the best way of flight.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, if a storm and 'winter' shall occur sometime, one may pray and awaken Christ by his prayers that he may rebuke 'the wind and sea', so that 'when it has become calm' he may flee again,¹⁷⁸ and not be seized by fornication, greed,¹⁷⁹ empty pride, or by some other evil that pursues him, or even by the abomination of desolation itself,¹⁸⁰ that is false doctrine.

45 'Pray that your flight not occur in winter or on the Sabbath'.¹⁸¹

In six days God made the works of the world and rested on the Sabbath (and 'he rested' 'from the works' of the world that he began to make) but the works of justice were always in effect without beginning and will be in effect without end. So too the races of people prior to the advent of Christ have worked all the works of the world, and no one rested from them, observing the Sabbath without ceasing from good works. But when our Lord came, our Sabbath and our rest, he added for us the rest that accompanies his Sabbath, so that just as he rested on the Sabbath from the works of the world, but not from works of justice, so we too, with him, should keep the Sabbath by abstaining¹⁸² from worldly, fleshly, and harmful works, but always pursue works of justice. And he also testifies through the prophet that he was to announce a Sabbath of this kind to us in which we should do no servile work when he speaks of the unworthy Jews as follows: 'Until I swore in my wrath: If they shall enter into my rest'.¹⁸³ And again when Lamech named his son Noah in the mystery of Christ, he spoke of him in this way: 'And he called his name Noah, saying, This one will give us rest from our sorrows and from the works of our hands, and from the earth that the Lord has cursed'.¹⁸⁴

Everyone, therefore, who lives in Christ always lives in the Sabbath and while he rests in repose from evil works, he incessantly performs the works of justice. But many who wear the name of Christ, on the contrary, regrettably observe a Sabbath from good works but perform evil works. And sometimes there are those in between who dismiss a Sabbath observance from evil works and observe a Sabbath from good works, not performing good works, but evil. And some also observe a Sabbath from evil works but do not pursue good works although one must not only flee evil works but also pursue good works. 'On' such a 'Sabbath' of good works, therefore, when a Christian person does not do good works, Christ orders us to pray, that our 'flight not occur' on that Sabbath.

¹⁷⁶ See Mt 24:16.

¹⁷⁷ Lk 8:23.

¹⁷⁸ See Mt 8:24-6.

¹⁷⁹ See 1 Cor 6:18; Rom 1:29; Eph 5:3.

¹⁸⁰ See Mt 24:15.

¹⁸¹ Mt 24:20.

¹⁸² My addition.

¹⁸³ Ps 94:11.

¹⁸⁴ Gn 5:29.

For when you cease from good works, if indeed you shall have stood in the presence of the abomination and submitted yourself to it of your own accord by your own free will, you have died by the sword of the false teaching. But if you shall have wished to flee and the abomination of desolation shall have pursued you, either he will break you by his persecutions, because your good works are not producing the power of patience in you, or he will capture you in his deceits because your good works are not producing the light of understanding in you. For no one in such danger of false doctrine is easily conquered and deceived unless he is unprotected by good works. For this reason, the apostle says of this very danger, 'Because they have not received the love of the truth, he will give them the working of error, so that they may believe a lie, that all who have not believed in the truth but have consented to iniquity may be judged.'¹⁸⁵

But when we shall have seen 'the abomination of desolation which is mentioned by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place',¹⁸⁶ we will also see the great tribulation approaching, 'such as has not happened from the beginning of the world up to' that time, 'nor will it happen afterwards'. For what greater 'tribulation' is there than to see our brothers deceived by the abomination of desolation because it is standing in the holy place? And if indeed the physical death of a friend or neighbour produces great tribulation for the person who did not expect it, what sort of tribulation do you think will occur for the person who suffers with another member who shall have suffered, or for the person who is even inflamed when some brother shall have been made to stumbled?¹⁸⁷ But also if someone should see himself shaken and thrown into confusion by the abomination 'of desolation' as though he is not the abomination of desolation, and shall see himself put in peril because of the delight which the abomination of desolation has in the holy place, with the result that he nearly consents that the abomination is God, so to speak, and delivers himself to the abomination as if he were God, in what way do you think that person is afflicted with great tribulation 'such as' he has 'not' experienced 'from the beginning' of his entry into the world 'up to' that time?¹⁸⁸ But another such 'tribulation' will be able to seize him at some time, especially if one is carried off so that he thinks 'the abomination standing in the holy place' is not 'the abomination of desolation', but God the Word.¹⁸⁹

And in addition, if someone should clearly perceive 'the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place', and follow him, making excuse for himself from the divine Scriptures, as if denying Christianity were a matter of indifference, declaring that denial is not denial, and thinking that there is no

¹⁸⁵ 2 Thess 2:10-12.

¹⁸⁶ Mt 24:15.

¹⁸⁷ See 1 Cor 12:26; 2 Cor 11:29.

¹⁸⁸ See 2 Thess 2:4.

¹⁸⁹ I concur with Vogt that the sentence as it stands is nonsense. He suggests either taking the sentence as a question, or deleting the 'not', or replacing it with 'and' so that it is clear that further distresses are possible (see Vogt [1993] 182, n. 64). I have deleted the initial negative in my translation. As the Latin text stands, it begins: 'But no other such tribulation will be able...'

harm to the one who eats the foods of the sacrifices¹⁹⁰ (bringing out examples from the Scriptures), and that it is permitted, as a matter of indifference, to be sexually involved with different women at one and the same time as the patriarchs once did—the abomination of desolation is greater than all those sins, that is, the word that takes its stand in the place of the holy Scriptures, speaking ‘iniquity against the height’¹⁹¹ and inducing people to separate from the creator, who alone is the true God, and believe in another god. I do not know what god, who might be higher than him to whom nothing is comparable, when one such as our Saviour says, ‘The Father who sent me is greater than me.’¹⁹² So ‘great’, therefore, is the ‘tribulation’ produced by the abomination of desolation standing ‘in the holy place’ that the following things are said of it: ‘And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved, but because of the elect those days will be shortened.’¹⁹³ And the ‘tribulation’ is so ‘great’ that occurs in that abomination of desolation that God shortens the days of that tribulation, cutting short their overflow that is added by the abomination of desolation. For if God had not shortened it, there is no other possible way that all flesh that is to be saved be saved.

‘Those days’ are understood to be the precepts and doctrines of the truth placed in the Scriptures for the illumination of understanding souls. But understand with me that all ideas coming from the ‘knowledge falsely so-called’¹⁹⁴ that are added and joined to the words of the Scriptures are additions above and beyond the natural magnitude of the days of the Scriptures. The good God cuts short this addition for those whom he wishes. And as often as you see the heights exalting themselves ‘against the knowledge of God’¹⁹⁵ cut short by the advent of the word of truth in your understanding, so often understand the shortened days of tribulation and the abridged overflowing magnitude which the abomination of desolation always adds, contrary to nature, to the days of the Lord that are in the Scriptures. And ‘those days’ are shortened ‘because of the elect’ so that when they perceive in their understanding the cutting off the superfluity of days and that light alone remaining which is in accord with the word of truth, they will suffer nothing from the abomination of desolation, or from that which had been added over and above the true and natural days of the Scriptures.

46 ‘Then if someone shall say to you, Behold, here is Christ, or there, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders, to lead even the elect into error if possible. Behold, I have told you in advance. But if they shall say to you: Behold he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold he is in the houses, do not believe it. For as the lightening comes out of the east and appears as far as the west, so will be the advent of the Son of Man. For wherever there is a corpse, there the eagles are gathered.’¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ See 1 Cor 8.

¹⁹⁴ See 1 Tim 6:20.

¹⁹¹ See Ps 72:8.

¹⁹⁵ See 2 Cor 10:5.

¹⁹² Jn 14:28.

¹⁹³ Mt 24:22.

¹⁹⁶ Mt 24:23–8.

Since we have said that 'the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place' is the word of the lie because it is seen to stand in the holy place of the Scriptures, someone will say: And how does someone say to the disciples of Christ, 'Behold, here is Christ, Behold, there', as if the lie were not standing there?¹⁹⁷ And another will say, 'Behold, he is in the wilderness', and another, 'Behold, he is in the houses'? Consider, then, if we can reply to this objection that it says: 'Behold, here; Behold, there', because what it says, 'Behold, here; Behold, there', is not to be looked for outside Scripture. For he who will wish to deceive us and maintain things contrary to the truth will say: 'Behold, here is Christ', mentioning, for example, this passage of the Gospel. But the author of another error will say, 'Behold, here is Christ', offering another text as an example that appears to defend the word of that lie that he has proposed to champion. And so, from the law, from the prophets, from the apostles, each one produces the texts that appear to defend that lie as the truth. Or rather what it says is fulfilled in this way: 'Behold, here is Christ; Behold, there', disclosing not Christ, but some fiction of the same name, as in the teaching of Marcion and the traditions of Valentinus, or the lengthy fabulous invention of Basilides, or in the false testimony of Apelles against Paul. And there will be many others who will say to the disciples based on the divine Scriptures, adding their own private understanding to them: 'Behold, here is Christ; Behold, there'.

'And if they shall say to you, Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold he is in the houses, do not believe it'. Whenever, then, they offer some hidden Scriptures and not the ones in common use to prove their lie, they appear to say: Behold the word of truth is in the wilderness.¹⁹⁸ For hidden Scriptures are correctly called wildernesses in which either a few believe or no one at all, but every time they offer the canonical Scriptures to which every Christian gives consent and believes in, they appear to say: 'Behold, the word of truth 'is in the houses'. But we should not believe them nor 'go out' from the primary tradition of the church, nor believe otherwise than just as they handed the tradition down to us through the succession of the church of God. Or consider it as follows: Some of those who are professors of those false words indeed do not even imitate the Scriptures from the beginning, and thus they attempt to deceive. Therefore (I think), wishing to indicate those words that are completely outside Scripture he said:¹⁹⁹ 'If they shall say to you, Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out' from the rule of faith. But, wishing to indicate those who imitate the divine Scriptures for the sake of schism, he said: 'If they shall say to you: Behold, he is in the houses, do not believe it'. 'Do not believe' what

¹⁹⁷ Greek fragment: (Those who understand these words in a contemplative manner say) The abomination stood; how is it possible that it is here or there?

¹⁹⁸ Greek fragment: And the one who is outside the faith and the canon of the church and the Scripture says, Behold, he is in the wilderness.

¹⁹⁹ Greek fragment: Therefore it is added: 'Do not go out', for the person who believed in the wisdom of the world went out and became a Gentile.

is said, whatever they have avowed as proof from the Scriptures and from the mysteries that are in them.²⁰⁰ For the truth is like lightning that 'comes out of the east and is seen as far as the west'. The truth of the church of God is like this, for from it alone has 'the sound gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the circle of the earth', and the truth of God alone truly runs swiftly.²⁰¹

47 'For as the lightening comes out of the east and is seen as far as the west, so will be the advent of the Son of Man.'²⁰²

We ought to know this too, that the 'lightening' of the truth will not 'be seen' from a single passage of the Scriptures and lack support from another passage; it is supported from every passage of the Scriptures, that is, either from the writings of the Law, the prophets, the Gospels, or the apostles. And this 'lightening' of the truth which 'comes out from the east', that is from the beginnings of Christ, 'will be seen' as far as the dispensation of his passion, which is the location of his west. And 'the advent of the Son of Man', that is, of the word of truth, is like this kind of lightening.²⁰³ And we can also understand the words, 'It comes out from the east and will be seen as far as the west', as follows: Christ is shown to be the word, the truth, and the wisdom of God²⁰⁴ from the first beginning of the creation of the world up to the last writing of the apostles (that is from Genesis up to the apostolic books), after whom faith is to be put in no writings as it is in those. Or they can be understood as follows: Since 'the Law and the prophets', in which is the 'lightening of the truth', 'are up to John', and the Law is indeed the east, John going down is the 'end of the law'.²⁰⁵ Now it is the church alone that does not take away from the word and meaning of this lightening, nor does it add anything as if it were an additional prophecy. But if it is necessary to investigate precisely why it is not said 'rising' [east] in the singular and 'sitting' [west]²⁰⁶ in the singular, but 'from the risings as far as the settings', we will say that 'the Law and the prophets up to John' is one rising and one setting; the other rising up to the setting is Christ Jesus up to Paul, to whom Christ 'appeared' as the last of the apostles 'as to one born out of season'.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁰ Greek fragment: The one who proclaims hidden things will say, 'Behold he is in the chambers', wherefore it is added, 'Do not believe it'.

²⁰¹ Ps 18:5; see 147:4.

²⁰² Mt 24:27.

²⁰³ Greek fragment: Figuratively the lightening of the truth to which the coming of the Son of Man is compared is consistently maintained in every Scripture of the Law, the prophets, the Gospels, and the apostles. And though it comes from the east, the beginnings of Christ, it is seen as far as the west which is related to the economy of the passion.

²⁰⁴ See Jn 1:1; 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24.

²⁰⁵ Mt 11:13; see Rom 10:4. 'John going down' has a double meaning. It alludes, of course, to his death, but it is also the word rendered 'west' in the translation of Mt 24:27. The 'going down' of the sun was the common way of indicating the west.

²⁰⁶ The bracketed words are my additions to show the connection with the translation of Mt 24:27 given above.

²⁰⁷ See 1 Cor 15:8. Greek fragment: And see if the Law is one rising and the end of the Law one setting; another rising up to its setting is Jesus Christ up to Paul, to whom 'he appeared' last of all 'as if to one untimely born'.

And consider this too, that we said above there is one 'abomination of desolation that is said by the prophet Daniel to be standing in the holy place', but he adds, as if speaking of many, 'false Christs will arise'.²⁰⁸ For, in general, there is one antichrist, but his forms are many, as if we should say: there is, in general, one lie, but there are found to be many lies in relation to the differences of the false doctrines.²⁰⁹ For if lie does not differ from lie, as for instance, a lie of Basilides, or Marcion, or Valentinus, or Apelles, or of others like them, there appears to be one lie. But if they are invented in relation to differing doctrines, there are many that will arise. For these are the antichrists and all who shall have arisen after them. But just as, from the age, those who were holy prophets of the true and one Christ made known the sufferings of Christ and his subsequent future glory,²¹⁰ so understand with me that in relation to the one and the same 'false Christ' there are his many 'false prophets'. The 'false prophets' of the antichrist, therefore, are not teachers of some one lie, but of all lies. They preach and teach his false words as true. In accordance with what we have said, therefore, they who teach the word in conformity with the rule of the church are prophets of Christ; but they who teach the word of Marcion or of any of the others preach a false word. They are prophets of that antichrist who is in accord with Marcion, that is, of that lie that Marcion introduced; others are 'false prophets' of that lie that is in accordance with Basilides; but others of that lie that comes from Apelles. You will say similar things also of those preachers of the individual heresies. For they are all means of persuasion that are offered in support of the word of the antichrist; they are the 'signs and wonders' of that antichrist that are suggested by the serpent, that wisest 'of all the beasts of the earth',²¹¹ and the prince of the Assyrians who has great understanding. These are the 'great signs and wonders that would lead astray, if possible, even the elect'.²¹² But when he says, 'if it is possible', it is an expression of hyperbole, for he neither proclaimed nor said 'that even the elect' would be plunged 'into error', but he wishes to show that often the arguments of the heretics are very persuasive and capable of disturbing even those who listen judiciously. But since our Saviour tells us all things in advance let us neither go forth into the desert nor believe those who declare that Christ is 'in the houses'.²¹³

And let us add to these things we have said further that every word that professes to be the truth when it is not the truth, whether it is among the Gentiles or the barbarians, is the antichrist in another mode, wishing to deceive as if he were the truth, and to separate people from him who said, 'I am the truth'.²¹⁴ Let us not, therefore, give heed to those who say, 'Behold, here is the Christ', but do not show him in the church, which is full of the lightening 'from

²⁰⁸ See Mt 24:15, 24.

²⁰⁹ Greek fragment: And, in general, there is one Antichrist, as there is one lie, but specifically they are many and there are many false teachings and doctrines.

²¹⁰ Greek fragment: And as there are prophets of Christ, the true word, there are also false prophets of the antichrist, who is the false word.

²¹¹ See Gn 3:1.

²¹² Mt 24:24.

²¹³ See Mt 24:26.

²¹⁴ Jn 14:6.

the east which is seen as far as the west, which is full of the true light, which is 'the pillar and ground of the truth,'²¹⁵ in whose totality is the total advent of the Son of Man who says to all people everywhere: 'Behold I am with you all the days of your life until the end of the age.'²¹⁶ And wherever the 'corpse' of Jesus shall be, which is connected with the dispensation of his passion, who felt that he might raise up those who had fallen, there 'will be gathered' not just any kind of disciples, but 'eagles', of whom the prophet also said, 'They shall take wings as eagles, and they shall run and not grow weary, and they shall walk and not hunger', and in the Proverbs, Solomon makes him like him who 'is rich in God', when he says, 'Wings have been prepared for him like those of an eagle, and he returns to the house of the one set over him.'²¹⁷ And take note that he did not say, 'Wherever the corpse shall be, there' the vultures or the ravens 'will be gathered', but wishing to show that all who have believed in the passion of the Lord are magnificent and royal, he said appropriately, 'Where the corpse shall be, there also the eagles will be gathered.'²¹⁸

48 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be moved. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and all the tribes of the earth will beat their breasts.'²¹⁹

Since we are considering concepts greater than the human understanding can encounter, even that of those who have made more exceptional progress in wisdom than others, come, let us discuss the saying. First of all, let us seek the things that can easily be recovered for the explanation of the text of the Gospel as if the Lord prophesies in it; then let us investigate what the truth of these words might be in relation to those people who think there is something more sublime and precise in the words, preserving the sequence of the moral traditions in these words as above. Someone will say, then, that just as darkness seems to arise from the extensive smoke when large fires are kindled, so too at the end of the world which is to be kindled by fire, even 'the great luminaries'²²⁰ will be darkened so that, when the sun has been darkened, consequently the 'moon' also, failing to receive light from the sun, is unable 'to give' its proper 'light'. And it is necessary that they understand the nature of the great darkness of the world in this way in the first instance. And in the same way when the light 'of the stars' has lost all its strength, the body of what remains of them becomes denser and falls 'from heaven' since it is incapable of being

²¹⁵ 1 Tim 3:15.

²¹⁶ Mt 28:20.

²¹⁷ Is 40:31; Prov 23:5.

²¹⁸ Greek fragment: For where the corpse is, related to the economy of the passion of Jesus who fell so that he could make those who had fallen stand, there will be gathered not just any chance disciples but those who have grown wings and, according to Solomon, who have magnificently and royally prepared wings like eagles for those who have believed in the passion of Christ, wherefore neither vultures nor ravens [will be gathered] but an animal that does not devour corpses.

²¹⁹ Mt 24:29-30.

²²⁰ See Gn 1:16.

lifted up as at first when it was raised and borne up by its own light. When these things come to pass, it follows reasonably that the rational 'powers of heaven' undergo astonishment, experience a certain movement, and 'are disturbed', removed of course from their first functions. The person who understands these words in this way will add that 'then the sign of the Son of Man will appear', in whom the heavenly bodies 'which were in heaven and on earth' were made,²²¹ as for example, the power that was at work when the Son of Man was hung on the wood and his 'sign' shone brightly 'in heaven.' And the people from 'all tribes' who previously had not believed the message of Christianity and, in addition, had said evil things about it, then recognizing it by that 'sign' that is revealed will beat their breasts and lament for their ignorance and sin, because they did not accept the word of the Lord.²²²

But another will have other thoughts about these words. He will think that (as these words have shown) the destruction of the world will not occur by fire, but by its exhaustion. And he will use an example like this: just as when the light of a luminary fails, its light is diminished little by little, so when the nourishment of the heavenly lights fails, 'the sun will be darkened', no longer having their breath coming over it. But when the greater luminaries suffer these things, to an even greater extent the 'moon' will not be able itself to display that glowing brightness and its return to visibility after its waning. When these things affect the sun, therefore, the light of the stars will also fail so that what shall have remained in them, as if it were of the earth, falls 'from heaven', and all 'the powers of heaven' will be moved when these things come about. For just as in the dispensation of the cross 'when the sun failed there was darkness over all the earth',²²³ so too when the sign 'of the Son of Man' appears 'in heaven' the light of the sun and moon will fail, and that of the stars also, as if consumed by the great power of that sign, at whose appearing, 'the tribes' that shall have remained on the earth at that time 'will beat their breasts'. He will use, in addition to these things, the example of Isaiah the prophet who speaks as follows: 'For behold, the day of the Lord is coming without remedy, a day of anger and wrath, to make the circle of the earth a desert and to destroy sinners from it. For the stars of heaven, Orion, and all heaven's ornaments will not give their light, and the sun will be darkened at its rising, and the moon will not provide its brightness. And I will order evils for the circle of the earth, and

²²¹ See Col 1:20.

²²² Greek fragment: To whom we must say in relation to the literal sense that as the great luminaries are darkened and do not give light because of the mass of smoke from a conflagration or because they no longer congeal in the rising smoke, so the light in the stars wastes away, the earth-like part that remains, being unable to elevate itself, will be removed from heaven, and the rational powers of heaven, suffering a strange tossing about and which passes through them and returns again, will be shaken, perhaps for the better, and the sign, by which the things in heaven and on earth are made to be at peace will appear, so that the unbelievers become aware and lament for having spoken evil of Christianity.

²²³ Lk 23:45, 44; see Mt 27:45.

their own sins on the impious.'²²⁴ Likewise he will also use words from Joel such as these: 'The earth will be thrown into disorder before his face and heaven will be moved, the sun and moon will become dark and the stars will not give light. And the Lord will utter his voice before his force for his camp is extremely fortified, because the works of his words are mighty.'²²⁵ Likewise: 'And I will give portents in heaven above, and on earth blood and fire and smoke; the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and famous day of the Lord shall come.'²²⁶

And you will find many words like these in the Scriptures if you want to consider nothing in these Gospel passages other than the simple words. For also in relation to the words, 'Then all the tribes of the earth will beat their breasts,' you will take such words from the prophet Zachariah as if there is no need for interpretation, 'And it will be in that day I will seek to destroy all nations that shall come against Jerusalem, and I will pour out a spirit of grace and mercy on the house of David and on all the inhabitants in Jerusalem; and they will think of me because they have danced, and they will mourn for themselves, mourning as for a loved one, and they will experience grief as for a firstborn. In that day wailing will be magnified over Jerusalem as the wailing of a pomegranate cut off in the plane, and the land will mourn by tribes; the tribe of the house of David separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Nathan separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Levi separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Symeon separately, and their wives separately, and all the tribes that are left separately, and their wives separately.'²²⁷ Therefore, it will seem to some that the interpretation ought to extend to this point and to investigate nothing beyond the text.

49 But because one who speaks about the divine Scriptures ought to care not only for the simple, so that, because of them, he neglects those with a greater capacity for the nature of the exact words, for the sake of such people, therefore, let us give a moral explanation of a few points as we are able lest perhaps the traditions of this kind are false and contain nothing like what God ought to say about things like this. And people such as this will say: How can it be said that the light of the sun 'will be darkened' when Isaiah the prophet declares that at the end there will be some increase of the sun, but here the word speaks of a taking away? In a similar way Isaiah also relates that the moon will be as the sun, but the present passage says that 'it will not give its light.'²²⁸ And they say the following things of the stars: because there is a large space between earth and heaven, especially up to the middle zone where there are no wandering stars, therefore, in consideration of its altitude it is possible to think that unless

²²⁴ Is 13:9–11. Greek fragment: One must use the words in Isaiah concerning the day of the Lord in relation to these things.

²²⁵ Joel 2:10, 31.

²²⁶ Joel 2:30, 31.

²²⁷ Zach 12:9–14.

²²⁸ See Is 30:26.

the stars are immeasurably large, their light, coming from so great a space, would not be seen by all people located throughout the lands. And just as some attempt to say that either all or the majority of the stars are larger than the earth itself (using the argument to commend the reasonableness of their words that the whole heaven assembled in the manner of a sphere encircles the entire earth), they say something like this furthermore, that those who enumerate the truth of those things said simply from the text itself say that an impossibility in nature itself is possible, namely that 'stars' of such great magnitude fall 'from heaven'. For where do they 'fall' since the earth is insufficient for their vastness, nor can it contain, if I may put it this way, the vastness of two stars? Assume, nevertheless, that it receives two or three; it surely cannot receive such a multitude, can it? Is it perhaps necessary, therefore, to understand something else of a moral nature in the divine Scriptures? It is daring indeed, but necessary; there is still need for much reflection on these passages for the person who wishes to show the possibility and the truth of the Scriptures at the same time.

He will say, therefore, that the sun is to be darkened by the devil who 'transfigures himself into an angel of light'²²⁹ and deceives many as if he were the 'sun'. Since, therefore, he is made known at the end when there is darkness, he pretends to be the sun, and for this reason it can be understood that it is said of him, 'the sun will be darkened'.²³⁰ And he will say that this understanding is more respectable than to think that such a sun will undergo darkness. It is appropriate, he says, that all agree, without any danger, with this credible report about a sun of this kind being darkened in this way. And 'the moon', that appears to be illuminated by this kind of sun, is also to be understood in the logical sequence that follows from that kind of sun. For every 'assembly of evil-doers'²³¹ which often claims to possess and 'give the light', will not give its light then when it has been disproved and shown up with its condemned doctrines.²³² But also all those who promised the truth to people whether in false doctrines or mighty works but, thinking of themselves, seduced them with lies, are appropriately said to be 'stars' falling 'from heaven', but 'from' his 'heaven' (if I may put it this way) where they were appointed as heights exalting themselves 'against the knowledge of God'.²³³ And to recommend this mode of expression he will use the example of the Proverbs that says, 'The light

²²⁹ 2 Cor 11:14.

²³⁰ Greek fragment: In the anagogical sense you will say that it is the devil, who for a long time transforms himself as an angel of light and has deceived many as though he were the sun, who is the darkened sun, and at the end will be exposed as darkness and the dissembler of the sunrise.

²³¹ Ps 21:17.

²³² Greek fragment: And the moon that will not give 'light' is the assembly of evil-doers that promises to give light, but at that time will be exposed when its doctrines are overthrown.

²³³ 2 Cor 10:5. Greek fragment: And those who exalted themselves 'against the knowledge of God' in the heights of arguments are the stars that will fall from his own heaven.

of the just is always inextinguishable, but the light of the impious will be extinguished²³⁴ and he will add that true knowledge, indeed, (with which they will have illuminated themselves who have heard the one who says, 'Enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge'²³⁵) is the light of the just, and false knowledge is the light of the impious, and the light of the saints is always inextinguishable, but the light of those who fall from the truth is extinguished. The light of that sun of which we spoke, therefore, and of that moon which we exposed 'will be darkened', but also ***²³⁶ all which exalt themselves 'against the knowledge of God'²³⁷ 'will fall' from his height which they thought to be heaven. And perhaps it is thus appropriate that it is said, 'I saw Satan fall like lightening from heaven.'²³⁸ But when these things, involving that kind of sun, moon, and stars, come to pass, the divine 'powers of heaven' will not at all be unmovable, but 'they will be moved'; when that 'sun' shall have been shown to be dark, and that 'moon' will not show its brightness, and such 'stars' as Jude mentions in his epistle shall have fallen.²³⁹ 'Then' what is bright 'will appear in heaven' and all who have borne 'the image of the heavenly'.²⁴⁰ And when these things shall have thus come to pass, the 'tribes' of heaven will rejoice, but the 'tribes of earth' which have borne the image of the earth, 'will beat their breasts'. And in addition, to commend his tradition of this sort, the person who has produced this interpretation will add that although the sun perceived by the senses has been darkened (as this may be allowed to be so) along with the moon that does 'not' give its brightness, and the stars that fall, it is not possible that 'tribes' of people be on the earth. And if this is not possible, certainly 'the tribes of the earth' do not 'beat their breasts' (as the text says). Therefore, (as the Lord says in the Gospel) 'those who laugh now' 'will beat their breasts' then,²⁴¹ and they will mourn as those who are the 'tribes' of the earth. And the person who wishes to lift up the things that are said to a moral explanation will attempt to interpret the words of Isaiah and Joel in relation to these words.

And in addition to what has been said about the stars that fall, it is not irrational to add from the Revelation of John about the third part of the stars that are dragged to earth by the tail of the dragon. For it says, 'And another sign was seen in heaven, and behold a large red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads, and his tail dragged a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.'²⁴² Now is not the time to explain all of these things individually about the seven heads of the dragon, which may possibly be referred either to other princes of the affairs of wickedness, or to so many sins 'to death'²⁴³ of the leaders; but they may be explained in their own time in the Revelation of John. But neither is it the time now to explain or speak of the ten horns (because they are the kingdoms of wickedness of the

²³⁴ Prov 13:9.²³⁵ Hos 10:12.²³⁶ Something is missing in the MS; Klostermann suggests 'stars'.²³⁸ Lk 10:18.²³⁹ See Jude 13.²⁴⁰ See 1 Cor 15:49.²³⁷ See 2 Cor 10:5.²⁴¹ See Lk 6:25.²⁴² Rev 12:3-4.²⁴³ See 1 Jn 5:16.

serpent and, possessing the nature of the serpent, proceed on their chest and belly because of sins²⁴⁴) because the present narrative is about the seven diadems which the dragon is seen to have on its seven heads (as for example, some head of the dragon receives diadems for individuals who are conquered).

But the principal explanations and examinations of these matters must take place when the book itself shall have been proposed for us to explain; now, however, this alone must be explained from that Revelation, that the tail of the dragon 'dragged a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.'²⁴⁵ For my view is that the person who ought to hear: 'You shall go after the Lord your God' and, 'Come after me,'²⁴⁶ and plugs his ears to these words and follows sin, is being dragged by the tail of the dragon and walks behind him. And if the dragon takes hold of one who has lived in such a way that he should hear, 'You are the light of the world,'²⁴⁷ and his good works once shone and he was once appointed a star and had his citizenship in heaven,²⁴⁸ if he shall have been snatched away by the dragon to earth, this person will be a star dragged by the tail of the dragon and cast to the earth. In this way stars are dragged by the tail of the dragon and cast to the earth. But there are others (some part of which are darkened while the greater part is full of light) to which the following word from Revelation appears to point: 'And the fourth angel sounded his trumpet; and a third part of the sun was struck, and a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so that a third part of them was darkened.'²⁴⁹ And there are some who have not at all observed what is said: 'Let your light shine before men,'²⁵⁰ nor have they been entirely extinguished and darkened, but partly. For some, because of their knowledge, have shone as the brightness of heaven, and others, because of their manner of life, have been made as the stars of heaven. Some, however, may perceive that we have not set these things forth sequentially in relation to the preceding explanations, and that we have given a piecemeal explanation because there indeed we spoke of stars that were going to fall, which had appeared to be stars but were not, and here of these who truly were stars and have fallen either completely or partially. Let us respond to the objectors in this way: by bringing forth the examples that we did, we have demonstrated that in general human beings are to be understood as 'stars,' not particular kinds of stars. In other respects that passage has its own interpretation and this one its own.

Nevertheless, when these things have thus happened, 'the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then the tribes of the earth will beat their breasts'. It is not absurd to use the following examples of Zachariah the prophet in relation to these words: 'And it will be in that day I will seek to destroy all nations that shall come against Jerusalem, and I will pour out a spirit of grace and mercy on the house of David and on all the inhabitants in Jerusalem; and

²⁴⁴ See Gn 3:14.

²⁴⁸ See Phil 3:20.

²⁴⁵ See Rev 12:4.

²⁴⁹ Rev 8:12.

²⁴⁶ See Sir 46:10; Mt 4:19.

²⁵⁰ Mt 5:16.

²⁴⁷ Mt 5:14.

they will think of me because they have danced, and they will mourn for themselves, mourning as for a loved one, and they will experience grief as for a firstborn. In that day wailing will be magnified over Jerusalem as the wailing of a pomegranate cut off in the plane, and the land will mourn by tribes; the tribe of the house of David separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Nathan separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Levi separately, and their wives separately, the tribe of the house of Symeon separately, and their wives separately, and all the tribes that are left separately, and their wives separately.²⁵¹ Every earthly multitude, therefore, since it is a 'tribe of the earth', because they themselves have imputed existence to themselves, mourn with those like themselves, especially if it is necessary to mourn more profusely for some sins.

And I think by these words to have shown the differences between those who appear to have been in the faith and in their own crowd, but have not pleased God. The house of David, therefore, which was appointed from the people, is mourning because it did things worthy of mourning by kings and magnates. And the tribes of Nathan, who belong to the teachers because Nathan was a prophet and to prophesy is to teach, lived wickedly and are mourning. And the tribes of the house of Levi are mourning. These are the sinners from those who have been put forward in the church and have held priestly orders and have not managed their charge well. But in truth, it belongs to God alone to speak either of these whom we have mentioned or of the tribe of Symeon. But we think at present that all who have gone through catechism and have been instructed in the divine mystery and have not been appointed to any of the tribes that we mentioned above and have committed serious sins (the kind that most of the laity commit) are of the tribe of Symeon, and the remaining people [belong to the tribes]²⁵² that Zachariah called the tribes that are left and did not name specifically. And there is no need whatever to speak also of the women of the individual tribes who mourned separately. And see if you are able, in every single division, to call those who were more physically and worldly oriented women, but to say that those, who in comparison were better than them, were men.

50 'And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with much power and glory'.²⁵³

It is clear that the catholic church seems to have received the tradition that the second advent of Christ will be in glory, along with other traditions about this advent. But ought we, based on what is written in this passage, think its conveyance is clouds that are material and perceptible to the senses? And ought we expect that great power and glory in relation to this kind of clouds? Or, must a moral sense also be considered in conjunction with the observation

²⁵¹ Zach 12:9-14.

²⁵² My addition.

²⁵³ Mt 24:30.

of the plain meaning? Or ought we not observe the plain meaning at all but only pursue a moral understanding? Not just anyone can ponder and scrutinize carefully the particular passages and, after he has investigated the meaning in them, on this basis pronounce which of them is most likely true and preserves the Gospel meaning and intention of Christ who spoke those words. But come, let us explain a few things in these passages with our moderate ability, if we at least have even that.

First, according to the text, their physical eyes 'will see the Son of Man' in human form 'coming' on 'the clouds' above 'with much power and glory', and the clouds are further said to be 'of heaven'.²⁵⁴ Events related earlier in the Gospel in the following manner agree with this exposition: 'When Jesus had taken Peter, John, and James, he led them up a very high mountain alone. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun and his garments became like light. And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah speaking with him'. 'And behold', it says, 'a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold, a voice from the cloud says, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him'.²⁵⁵ Therefore, just as when 'he was transformed, and his face shone like the sun and his garments became like light', and a 'voice' came 'from the cloud saying: this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased', so when he comes again, perhaps he will be transformed into a glorious form, or even as he was transformed then before his three disciples. Later he will not come on one cloud, but his conveyance will be on many. But since it follows that he would be transformed into a more excellent glory than he had been transformed into on the mountain, it is obvious from the fact that then he was transformed for the sake of only three, that at the end of the whole world he will appear 'in much glory', so that all may see him in glory.²⁵⁶ And at that time, 'a bright cloud' descending 'overshadowed them',²⁵⁷ later, however, many clouds will carry 'the Son of Man coming' with a conveyance worthy of his glory.²⁵⁸

But someone will say that just as in the forming of the human being God took 'the slime of the earth' and 'formed the human being' so, in order that the glory of Christ might be perceptible, God took from heaven and from a heavenly body and fashioned it into a body, first indeed into a shining cloud, but at the end into shining clouds, which is why clouds 'of heaven' are mentioned, in keeping with the fact that the slime of the earth was mentioned.²⁵⁹ And it is proper that the Father gives such admirable gifts to his Son, who 'humbled himself' and because of his love 'did not think it robbery to be equal to God,

²⁵⁴ Greek fragment: And he says the Son of Man himself will come as in a body.

²⁵⁵ Mt 17:2, 3, 5.

²⁵⁶ Greek fragment: And just as when he was transformed when he took along the three disciples, a bright cloud overshadowed them, so at the second advent, when he has been transformed more gloriously, he will come on a multitude of clouds, since he is to be seen not by three but by multitudes.

²⁵⁷ Mt 17:5.

²⁵⁸ See Dan 7:13.

²⁵⁹ See Gn 2:7.

but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and became 'the lamb of God' that he might take away 'the sins of the world'.²⁶⁰ For 'on this account also God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name'.²⁶¹ But not only did he exalt him in the spirit, but also in the body (that in all things he might be exalted), and it was the body that he received from the power of the most high and from the virgin for performing a ministry of this kind.²⁶² For it was appropriate also that he be honoured so that he might come 'upon' such 'clouds'; perhaps upon clouds that are animate and rational so the conveyance of the glorified Son of Man not lack life and be irrational, like the inanimate chariot and irrational horses by which Elijah was seen to be received according to the Scripture that says, 'And behold a chariot of fire and horses of fire'.²⁶³

And to show that the clouds that will be the conveyance of the Son of God will be animate and rational, we offer, as an example, the statements: 'And your truth extends to the clouds', and again, 'I will command the clouds that they not pour out rain on it',²⁶⁴ and especially the statement, 'And behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice speaking from the cloud',²⁶⁵ not that the Father was the cloud of the Son, but (so to speak) the Word of God came to the cloud just as it came to the prophets.²⁶⁶ And just as the one who hears Isaiah saying, 'I begot sons and made them great, and they have rejected me',²⁶⁷ hears not Isaiah but God the Father in Isaiah, so they who heard the voice from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son', heard not the cloud but the Father bearing testimony to the glory of the Son in it. If, therefore, prior to the dispensation of the passion such a cloud was prophesying, what ought we say of 'the clouds of heaven' on which 'they', who will see him then, 'will see the Son of Man coming with much power and glory'? And if indeed, 'they spread their garments on the road'²⁶⁸ so that the Son of God not tread on the earth in Jerusalem, out of their high esteem for him not wanting even the ass that was carrying him to tread on the earth, what is strange if the Father and God of all spreads heavenly clouds under the body of the Son as he descends for the work of the consummation? And indeed, Jesus came first 'with the power and glory' with which the Father had glorified him, from which 'power' 'he was performing signs and wonders among the people' and was healing 'every infirmity and sickness', for which reason also he said: 'Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone out from me'.²⁶⁹ But all that power was moderate, in comparison with that great power with which he is to come at the end, for it was the power of one who empties himself. But that great power of which it is written, 'They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory', will be the power of the Word of God who has been restored to the status he had 'from the beginning with God', before he emptied himself.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁰ Phil 2:8, 6, 7; Jn 1:29.

²⁶¹ Phil 2:9.

²⁶² See Lk 1:35.

²⁶³ 4 (2) Kgs 2:11.

²⁶⁴ Ps 56:11; Is 5:6.

²⁶⁵ Mt 17:5.

²⁶⁶ See Hos 1:1; Jer 14:1; cf. Origen, *Com/Jn* 2.2, 3.

²⁶⁷ Is 1:2.

²⁶⁸ Mt 21:8.

²⁶⁹ See Jn 17:5; Acts 6:8; Mt 4:23; Lk 8:46.

²⁷⁰ See Phil 2:7; Jn 1:1.

Understand his great glory in this way, beginning with the glory of Moses' face and passing on to Elijah, men who were seen in glory when 'the form of the face' of the Son of God 'became different' and his garment was changed.²⁷¹ But if you also understand what is said, 'For if what is reduced to nothing was with glory, much more will what remains be in glory',²⁷² you will perceive that great glory of the Son, of which it is written, 'With great power and glory'.

And in addition, you will understand even better what the text speaks of when you learn the following that is found in the Acts: 'And when he had said these things he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud received him from their eyes. And while they were looking intently into heaven as he was going, behold two men stood in white garments, who said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come as you saw him going into heaven.'²⁷³ For if we believe those by whom the cloud is said to have received him and bore him into heaven, how will he not come from heaven in accordance with the text, just as his disciples saw him 'going into heaven'? And in the Revelation of John it says in an analogous way, 'Behold he will come with the clouds, and every eye will see him and whoever has pierced him.'²⁷⁴ But let the person who is able understand whether it is the same that he comes 'on the clouds of heaven' and he comes 'with the clouds', or are the clouds 'on which' he will come one, and those 'with which' he will come another. And consider what Isaiah says in his vision of Egypt: 'Behold, the Lord is sitting on a light cloud and will come to Egypt.'²⁷⁵ Does he mean this Egypt that is commonly understood, or the entire world? For according to John himself, the place 'where their Lord was crucified' 'is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt'.²⁷⁶ Either the whole world or Judaea is given the name Sodom and Egypt. But he who will come to Egypt 'on a light cloud' will first make an ascension in Judaea (because he is to come again where he was first born). And 'where their Lord was crucified' is given the name 'Sodom', just as it was also once said to that people and its princes: 'Hear the word of the Lord, princes of Sodom, pay attention to the law of God, people of Gomorrah.'²⁷⁷

The following statement will also be used in these traditions: 'We will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord',²⁷⁸ and he will say, If the people who are blessed are caught up in the clouds in the air, why is it strange that 'the Son of God comes on the clouds with great power and glory'? Likewise, a cloud overshadowed the people coming out of Egypt.²⁷⁹ If these things are believed, how is it not reasonable that the clouds of heaven become a conveyance for the Lord of the people that he

²⁷¹ See Ex 34:35; Lk 9:29-31.

²⁷² 2 Cor 3:11.

²⁷³ Acts 1:9-11. Greek fragment: And just as he was taken up going in clouds, as it says in Acts that 'a cloud received him, and behold two men said to them: This Jesus will come in the manner in which you saw him going into heaven.'

²⁷⁴ Rev 1:7.

²⁷⁵ Is 19:1.

²⁷⁶ Rev 11:8.

²⁷⁷ Is 1:10.

²⁷⁸ 1 Thess 4:17.

²⁷⁹ See Ex 13:22.

might sit on them? And if that book is accepted that says that it is wisdom that 'became' for the people at that time 'a column of cloud in the day and a flame of fire at night,'²⁸⁰ someone will say that the clouds on which 'they will see the Son of Man coming' is 'the power of the Most High' and 'the Holy Spirit,'²⁸¹ which become 'clouds of heaven' for him so that he may come borne on them. Because this argument is rather strong and not to be despised, one who wishes to take what is said each way will not be reproached, including if he shall say they are intelligible clouds on which the Son of Man will come, whether they are the holy and divine virtues or the most blessed prophets. And the person who confesses that the second and glorious future advent of the Word to men at the end of the age has a moral intention will speak as we described this tradition above, but he will not also destroy the construction. But he who perceives the glorious and admirable construction of the passage and as a 'friend of God'²⁸² thinks the truth consists of the spiritual meaning alone, will say it is to be excused as it is for those who are children and 'little ones in Christ,'²⁸³ who take these things in a material way. But since he comes 'with much power' daily to the souls of everyone who believes that the second advent of the Word of God is in the clouds of the prophets and apostles, that is in the writings of the prophets and of the apostles which make him manifest and shine the light of truth on all his words, and declare him rising²⁸⁴ also over human nature in his divine perceptions.²⁸⁵ And we say that the 'great glory' of the most obvious doctrines in the prophets and apostles, which appears in the second advent of the Word, becomes visible to those who understand in this way.

51 'And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries.'²⁸⁶

Mark says it similarly as follows: 'And then he will send his angels and they will gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the end of heaven.'²⁸⁷ The assertion that the Saviour sends 'his angels with loud trumpets' (whatever those are) to gather 'his elect' is made subsequently to what is related in another parable about seeds and weeds.²⁸⁸ When he interprets the parable he says that 'the harvest is the end, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels and collect from his kingdom all causes of stumbling and those who commit iniquity and they will send them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of his Father.'²⁸⁹

²⁸⁰ See Wis 10:17.

²⁸¹ See Lk 1:35.

²⁸² See James 2:23.

²⁸³ 1 Cor 3:1.

²⁸⁴ See Zech 6:12.

²⁸⁵ Greek fragment: But in the anagogical sense the clouds on which the Lord comes are the divine scriptures that show forth the glorious coming of the Word of God.

²⁸⁶ Mt 24:31.

²⁸⁷ Mk 13:27.

²⁸⁸ See Mt 13:24-30.

²⁸⁹ Mt 13:39-43.

He also says something like this in the parable of 'the drag-nets thrown into the sea'.²⁹⁰

The Saviour, therefore, sends the 'angels' as 'reapers' gathering all the weeds so that after this the saints may shine 'like the sun in the kingdom of his Father';²⁹¹ in order that subsequently the elect may be gathered 'from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries'. Consider whether (as the simple suppose) only those who are found in the body at that time are to be gathered (he calls them 'the elect'), or surely all who 'are beloved in God the Father and are preserved in Jesus Christ'.²⁹² And see if it is not better to say, that all who are the called and 'elect' from the advent of Christ up to the end are to be gathered by the angels of Christ. And you will investigate if also those who existed from the foundation of the world up to the advent [are among the elect²⁹³], seeing that precisely the elect of Christ are not only those who are holy from the time of his advent (as some teachers of heresies claim), but all who existed from the foundation of the world, who saw, just as Abraham, the day of Christ and rejoiced in it with a divine rejoicing.²⁹⁴ But if it is not only those who are found in the body whom the angels are to gather (as the simple think), but all the 'elect' of Christ, it is worth considering what those who 'will gather the elect' are doing in the meantime or where they are lingering. And the discussion makes clear, when it says the elect are to be gathered not only 'from the four winds' but also 'from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries', that he refers not only to those who will have been seized in the body who are to be gathered as the 'elect' of Christ, but also to those who have departed from bodies. But I do not think the assertion that they will be gathered 'from the farthest parts of the heavens' applies to anyone on the earth, unless perhaps the holy angels will gather those humans who sometimes are mingled with the angels and teach heavenly things so that they may deliver those 'in the farthest parts' of heaven 'to their boundaries' who have been taught in advance and instructed, to the perfect teacher, the Word and Son of God in order to reign with him and to undertake those things that the Son has delivered to these who have previously accepted the heavenly teaching.²⁹⁵

And since this life of ours on earth is a shadow,²⁹⁶ it follows that those who, in that fullness of time will ascertain the remaining things, and will ascertain things more completely from the Son of God regarding the heavenly things themselves, are now instructed by the law and the prophets,²⁹⁷ so that they

²⁹⁰ See Mt 13:47-50.

²⁹¹ Mt 13:43.

²⁹² Jude 1.

²⁹³ My addition.

²⁹⁴ See Jn 8:56. Greek fragment: And either the called and elect from the coming of Christ up to the end are gathered by the angels of God or also those from the creation and foundation of the world who rejoiced at seeing the day of Christ as Abraham did.

²⁹⁵ Greek fragment: Perhaps in the meantime those who spend time with the angels who teach heavenly things in advance in order that, having been instructed under the perfect teacher, the Word of God, they may rule with him.

²⁹⁶ See Wis 5:9.

²⁹⁷ See Gal 3:24; 4:4.

who are 'from the farthest parts of the heavens' are in certain apprenticeships as it were so that they may be able afterwards to receive the wisdom of God and, more to the point, Wisdom itself, the Son of God, 'when that shall have come that' truly 'is perfect'.²⁹⁸ And let us also explain the 'four' winds from which the elect of Christ will be gathered by asking of what good things to come they have retained a shadow of the good things that have been recorded in Numbers of each tribe of the sons of Israel.²⁹⁹ Whence the first company of camps was that of Judah with their military force stationed to the east, and with them on each side Issachar and Zabulon. And to the south the tribe of Reuben and on each side Symeon and Gad. And the tribe of Ephraim to the west and on each side Benjamin and Manassah the last. And the tribe of Dan to the north and on each side Asher and Naphtali.³⁰⁰ Perhaps, therefore, when the tribes departed at that time they were shadows of the camps related to the mysteries of the true Israel. And just as at that time they were gathered from the four winds into Judaea and into the inheritance drawn up in order by Jesus,³⁰¹ their pedagogue and governor after Moses,³⁰² so the angels 'will gather the elect from the four winds' (not, however, from earthly winds, but 'from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries'), so that when they have been gathered by our Jesus they may lay hold of the divine and true inheritance.

In Matthew, therefore, the elect of Christ who are gathered are gathered 'from the four winds', 'from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries', but in Mark 'from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven',³⁰³ but after that 'from the farthest parts of the heavens to their boundaries'.³⁰⁴ And you will understand those who are gathered 'from the farthest part of the earth' when you consider the lifestyle of those who were on the earth and, as far as possible, the perfection of those who were converted on the earth. All, therefore, who have lived properly on the earth are not simply gathered from the earth, but 'from the farthest part of the earth', as for example, from the farthest parts of those living on the earth. But if, after the farthest part of a lifestyle which was on the earth, a subsequent lifestyle shall have caught up those who have had their lifestyle in heaven³⁰⁵ it takes them not simply from the farthest part of heaven as 'from the farthest part of the earth', but 'from the farthest parts of the heavens' because each single heaven has beginnings and perfections, that is, boundaries, of its own institution. For example, after the highest lifestyle possible on earth, the lifestyle of a single heaven and the perfection that is in it again catches a person up. Again, a second lifestyle of a

²⁹⁸ See 1 Cor 1:24; 13:10.

²⁹⁹ See Heb 10:1.

³⁰⁰ See Num 10:11–28.

³⁰¹ I.e. Joshua, Jesus being the Greek form of the name. This encouraged Origen, of course, to read it often with Christian meaning.

³⁰² See Gal 3:24.

³⁰³ Mk 13:27.

³⁰⁴ This latter appears to be a reference to Mt 24:31; the clause does not appear in Mark.

³⁰⁵ See Phil 3:20.

second heaven and the perfection that is in it catches a person up. Again, a third lifestyle of a third heaven and the perfection that is in it catches a person up. And understand with me that in this way there are many beginnings and boundaries, that is, perfections, of lifestyles of many heavens from which beginnings and boundaries of the various heavens God gathers 'his elect'. Or understand 'from the farthest parts of the heaven to their boundaries' in this way: The heavens in which God dwells are either the divine Scriptures or their authors, and the farthest parts of the Scriptures are their beginnings and their boundaries are their consummations. The saints, therefore, are gathered 'from the farthest parts of the heavens', that is from the beginning for those who live in the beginning stages of the Scriptures to those who live in their consummations, or more specifically, from the inexperienced among them to the perfect. And the angels who are sent by the Saviour to gather 'his elect will gather' them not with a voice of some sort, but with 'a trumpet' that is called 'loud,' giving no uncertain sound,³⁰⁶ but a sound that is certain and clear, so that those who hear and have come to know, yield themselves to the life of perfection that leads to the Son of God.

52 And since we want to understand what the 'loud trumpet' is, we ought to compare spiritual things with spiritual.³⁰⁷ Come, let us briefly explain about trumpets so far as we are able to comprehend it; perhaps we can at least understand the 'loud trumpet' of the angels from the suggestion gained by gathering these examples. It is written in Numbers: 'And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Make for yourself two trumpets of silver, hammered out thin in form, and they shall serve you for gathering the congregation and for causing the camp to advance. And you shall give a blast on them and the entire congregation shall be gathered to you at the door of the tent of testimony; but if they shall have given one blast all the leaders of the armies of Israel will come to you. And you shall give a first blast as a signal, and the camps that stand to the east will move forward; and you shall give a second blast as a signal, and the camps that stand to the south will move forward; and you shall give a third blast as a signal, and the camps that stand to the west will move forward; and you shall give a fourth blast as a signal, and those that stand to the west will break up camp; therefore they shall give a blast on the trumpet at their departure. And whenever you gather the congregation, give a blast but not for a signal. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall give the blasts on the trumpets, and it shall be an eternal ritual law for you in your generations. And if you shall go out to war in your land against adversaries, you shall give a blast on the trumpets and you will be remembered before your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. And you shall give blasts on the trumpets on the days of your joyfulness and on your festive days and on your new moons, and at your whole burnt

³⁰⁶ See 1 Cor 14:8.

³⁰⁷ See 1 Cor 2:13.

offerings and your sacrifices for your deliverances, and it shall be your reminder before your God. I am the Lord your God'³⁰⁸

Note indeed in these words that at the first signal of the trumpet the camps that are on the east move forward, and at the second the camps that are to the south move forward and, to put it briefly, the priests who are giving the blasts on the trumpets are gathering those who are of the camps of Israel 'from the four winds'. In comparison with the priests who give the trumpet blasts, the angels of Christ 'will gather his elect from the four winds with a loud trumpet'. In Numbers, however, the things that are done are written about earth, but in the Gospels 'from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven',³⁰⁹ and after these, 'from the farthest parts of the heavens to their farthest parts'. And perhaps if it is that 'the law holds a shadow of good things to come',³¹⁰ and what has been written in Numbers about the trumpets and the companies of Israel is a shadow of things to come, then, perhaps the trumpets of silver (since in many passages silver is taken for a word³¹¹) ***³¹² the loud sound of the word is understood to be a silver trumpet gathering each one 'into his group', according to the shadow,³¹³ as Moses called it, but according to the mystery as Paul calls it in the first epistle to the Corinthians.³¹⁴ But first the camps move forward with rational trumpets. So, the giving of the law comes about concerning those things that pertain to the war of Israel, which recalls matters of war by that signal of the trumpets. These trumpets bring those who are reminded of matters of war by those signals of the trumpets to save them from their enemies.³¹⁵ But the sound of the trumpets of hammered silver in the days of Israel's joyfulness which are taken in conjunction with their new moons were shadows of new moons to come, of which the apostle says, 'Let no one pass judgement on you in relation to food or drink or a part of a festive day or new moons or of Sabbaths. These things are shadows of things to come'.³¹⁶ And they are also taken up in relation both to Israel's whole burnt offerings and the sacrifices for their deliverances. It is appropriate to set forth these trumpet signals which are examples and shadows of worship in heaven, as if of some heavenly Israel that has its citizenship in heaven.³¹⁷

And we have taken these examples so that we may be able to understand in part what is written: 'He will send his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect'. But the apostle also points to the trumpets of the Gospels in the first epistle to the Thessalonians when he says: 'But we say this to you in the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who will remain till the advent of the Lord, will not precede those who sleep; since the Lord himself with a command and the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God will descend from heaven.'³¹⁸ He says the same in the first epistle to the Corinthians: 'We will all

³⁰⁸ Num 10:1-10.

³⁰⁹ Mk 13:27.

³¹⁰ Heb 10:1.

³¹¹ See Ps 11:7.

³¹² Klostermann marks a gap in the text.

³¹³ See 1 Cor 15:23; Heb 8:5.

³¹⁴ See 1 Cor 15:51, 52.

³¹⁵ See Num 10:9.

³¹⁶ Col 2:16, 17.

³¹⁷ See Phil 3:20.

³¹⁸ 1 Thess 4:15, 16.

indeed sleep, but we will not all be changed;³¹⁹ in a moment, in the wink of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound and the dead will rise incorruptible, and we will be changed.³²⁰ But according to the Law there is also festivity with trumpets, the new moon of the seventh month³²¹ perhaps being a mystery of some true festivity and of some spiritual and sublime trumpet.

53 'And learn a parable from the fig tree; for once its branch has become tender and it brings forth leaves, know that summer is near; so too when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, at the door. Truly I say to you that this generation will not pass away until all things come about. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'³²²

We will explain, so far as we can, how the parable of those things said about 'the fig tree' can be understood, so that perhaps this entire world and its consummation not be likened to the 'fig tree', and each of those advancing to the blessed life might see the glorious and perfect advent of Christ the Word in himself and be regarded to be like 'the fig tree'. For just as the fig tree in winter has the power of life in itself, but it is hidden and not very obvious, but afterwards, when winter is past, and the power of life itself shall begin to appear clearly, its 'branch' becomes tender and it 'brings forth leaves' from its own robust nature. And just as a tree has 'leaves' and fruit in its own power, and first there is a bud then, little by little, it proceeds and finally has its own produce, so too the world and each person who is saved has the power of life hidden in himself before the advent of Christ (as if in winter), but at the end, when Christ blows upon those who are tender and not hard-hearted branches, the things that were hidden in them come forth into summer 'leaves' immediately and show obvious fruits which those who look at Christ already see.³²³

So also in another parable of the Shepherd, if it is acceptable to one to read that book as well, it is related that 'the present age is winter for the just'³²⁴ who appear like their neighbours in nature, that is like other dried up trees, of course, but at the appropriate season they appear with their fruits. Consider also the fact that something like this is written in the first Psalm about the person who is blessed where it is said, 'He will be like a tree that has been planted beside flowing waters, which will give its fruit in its season, and will not lose its leaves, and whatever he shall do will prosper.'³²⁵ 'The winter is past, it departed on its own, flowers have appeared on the earth,' as it is written in the Song of Songs,³²⁶

³¹⁹ This reading resembles the Vulgate reading but is not identical ('We will all rise again, but we will not all be changed').

³²⁰ 1 Cor 15:51, 52.

³²¹ See Lev 23:24.

³²² Mt 24:32-5.

³²³ Greek fragment: Otherwise the whole world, whose end is prophesied, or each of those proceeding to live blessedly and to see the coming of Christ, the Word, which will be glorious and perfect, is compared to a fig tree. For as the fig tree, so also the world and each of those who are saved now has (as in winter) leaves and fruits in potential, but later in actuality when they shall have been made manifest in summer.

³²⁴ *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Similitude 3.2.

³²⁵ Ps 1:3.

³²⁶ Cant 2:11, 12.

since Christ has come who brought in the moderate temperature and put an end to the winter winds. And the fig tree, that is the world, now produces the tender branch, that is the church, which indeed is bringing forth 'leaves'; while 'summer' is near, it has, nevertheless, not yet come, but when summer has come it will offer fruits completely perfect and mature in Christ³²⁷ when, according to Jeremiah,³²⁸ the good figs are very good, gathered in baskets of good figs from which Christ wants to take and, as it were, savour their sweetness. But far be it from us that when Jesus comes to us and wants to eat from the fig tree he should find no fruit on it. For if he shall not have found fruit on it at his advent, he will say to that tree that has not displayed fruit, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you.'³²⁹ And that fig tree can be understood as the people of the circumcision to whom the Lord came, hungry, and when he did not find 'fruit on it' but only the appearance of life, he said: 'May no one ever eat fruit from you.' For this reason, at his advent that fig tree, that is, that people, 'immediately dried up.'³³⁰ That other fig tree, however, which was barren (so far as previous times were concerned), which was presently to be cut down because it had shown no diligence on its own from its own gardener, when dung begins to be put around it, will produce fruit. That tree that had once wasted the land will now, however, produce more copious fruit even for the time past when it was barren. And each of us, after the winter of trials and the harshness of past dangers hastens to the summer bringing forth the tender branch, not that hard heart but a heart that is supple to believe in God; and our progresses bring forth 'leaves' meanwhile and the flowers of works, so that we may later produce the most perfect fruits in Christ 'when that which is perfect has come.'³³¹ Furthermore, those who are saved also have the true vine in themselves (him who said, 'I am the true vine'³³²) and, in relation to this estimation of the vine, the Holy Spirit also is the true fig tree which presents the fruits of salvation, where 'each one will rest', according to the spiritual promise of God, 'under' his own 'vine' and 'under his own fig tree.'³³³ And that vine flowers and gives its scent in those who make progress, and the fig tree itself also brings forth its fruits, so that after worthy progress, their fruits are made worthy of the heavenly wine-presses, and the figs of that tree that produced tender, good fruit before the summer heat are in baskets of very good figs.³³⁴ Its fruit also cures those who are sick but not slow to pray, as it is written in Isaiah of Hezekiah the king, who was saved by means of figs so that he might not die;³³⁵ but also the

³²⁷ See Col 1:28.³²⁸ See Jer 24:3.³²⁹ Mk 11:14.³³⁰ Mt 21:19.³³¹ 1 Cor 13:10; see Col 1:28.³³² Jn 15:1.³³³ Mic 4:4. Greek fragment: And the person who has been afflicted with trial travels to summer bearing a tender branch, not a hard heart, and the advancements in works bear the leaves and the perfection, the fruits (even the most perfect fruits). And just as the Saviour is the true vine, so too the Holy Spirit, who bears the fruits of salvation, is the fig tree.³³⁴ See Jer 24:2.³³⁵ See Is 38:21. Greek fragment: The good figs, whose cake healed Hezekiah the king.

sun over him on the steps indicated a day made longer and brighter.³³⁶ There is, therefore, much hope in the fig tree, which indeed first, makes its branch 'tender' from the words of God, and later bears 'leaves'. For such people 'summer is near', and the glorious advent of Christ on the clouds 'is near, at the door',³³⁷ and the advent of the glory of the Word of God, and the 'kingdom of God' 'is near' to people of this kind.

54 'Truly I say to you that this generation will not pass away until all these things come about. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away'.³³⁸

Let us see what 'this generation' is of which Christ speaks. The simple refer the words to the destruction of Jerusalem and think it said of that generation that lived at the time of Christ and witnessed his passion and which is not to pass on before the destruction of that city occurs. But I do not know if they are able to explain word for word what is said: 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, stone will not be left here on stone which will not be destroyed'³³⁹ up to that which says: 'It is near, at the door'. For perhaps they can in some passages, but in others not at all, and I do not know if, pressed sufficiently, they can say anything.

We, however, noticing the term generation in many passages, take it with a double meaning. For we think there are two generations, one of Jews, and another of Gentiles. In this way, we also understand Ecclesiastes which says, 'A generation goes, and a generation comes, and the earth stands eternal'.³⁴⁰ For prophesying of the people of the Jews who were to pass away, it says, 'A generation goes', and of the people who were to believe of the Gentiles it said, 'A generation comes'. I think something like this is also said by Moses in his prayer in the eighty-ninth Psalm, 'Lord, you have become a refuge for us from generation to generation'.³⁴¹ God is a refuge of two generations because there is 'one God who justifies the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith'.³⁴² And because 'he is God not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles',³⁴³ therefore, 'the generation' of the new covenant which is before the Saviour 'will not pass away', nor will it depart to those blessed promises of that age, 'until all things come about' that Christ mentioned. For 'all things' that have been announced in advance for each of us must come about, just as we passed on in our several expositions. One 'generation', therefore, is that of the church that extends from the teaching of our Lord, the Saviour up to the end. And this 'generation' itself will pass away once this whole age does (and it will pass by this age that it may inherit that future age), nevertheless, 'it will not pass away until all these things come about'. And when it shall have been adequate in all these things and shall have continued impassable until the glorious

³³⁶ See Is 38:7, 8.

³⁴⁰ Eccl 1:4.

³³⁷ See Mt 24:30.

³⁴¹ Ps 89:1.

³³⁸ Mt 24:34-5.

³⁴² Rom 3:30.

³³⁹ Mt 24:2.

³⁴³ Rom 3:29.

advent of Christ, then it will pass by.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, 'until all these things' (not some of those things that are mentioned, and not others) 'come about, those things will not be: but 'this generation will pass away' when 'all these things' shall have happened, when not only 'earth', but also 'heaven' shall have passed away, that is not only these people whose life is earthly and for this reason are said to be earth, but also those whose 'manner of life is in heaven', and therefore are called heaven. And they 'will pass over' to future things and all their circumstances, that they may come to things that are more excellent and better.³⁴⁵ The expectation of the creature (since they are sons of God) awaits the revelation of these things, and 'every creature groans for them and suffers pain, until they receive the 'spirit of salvation' into the womb from the fear of the Lord, and give birth, producing their own offspring,³⁴⁶ and then the 'generation' of which the Saviour spoke will pass away along with 'heaven', as we explained it, and 'earth', as we interpreted it. 'But the words' that the Saviour spoke 'will not pass away' since the things that belong to their characteristics are at work now and will always be at work.³⁴⁷ And they are perfect and no longer admit of improvement by passing through what they are and arriving at that which they are not.

And because he said, 'But my words will not pass away' I suppose one must ask whether the words of Moses and the prophets will pass away but the words of Jesus Christ will not pass away, since the things they prophesied have indeed been fulfilled, but the words of Christ are always full and are always in the process of fulfilment and are being fulfilled daily and are never completely fulfilled, for they are the things that have been fulfilled in the saints and are being fulfilled and are still to be fulfilled. Or perhaps we ought to say that neither the words of Moses nor those of the prophets have been fulfilled at all, for in the proper sense those words of the Son of God both are, and are always, being fulfilled. It is good, therefore, to explain the profound meanings of the divine words in simple words; nevertheless, for the sake of the few, let us discuss this alone, understanding that the Word which is human in the Word of God

³⁴⁴ Greek fragment: The majority relate the teaching to the destruction of Jerusalem which those who saw the passion of Christ saw. He says, therefore, that the things he has said will come to pass completely and the generation of the faithful will remain... or since the term generation has many meanings in scripture (for it refers to both the people of the circumcision and the people of the Gentiles) one must note carefully that the generation of the new covenant which the Saviour has in view will not proceed to the promises until all things of which the Saviour spoke should come to pass. And these things must occur mystically to each of us, if one who has endured to the end in all things would remain impassible until the glorious coming of Christ.

³⁴⁵ See Gn 3:19; Phil 3:20. Greek fragment: Those in heaven and on earth who are said by metonymy to be heaven and earth will come to the end of all their circumstances that they may attain things that are transcendent.

³⁴⁶ See Rom 8:19, 22; Is 26:18.

³⁴⁷ Greek fragment: For the words of the Saviour are always effecting the things that are proper to them since they are perfect, and they do not admit improvement since they have arrived at what they are. But 'heaven and earth will pass away, but his words will remain' since they are the words of the one through whom all things came to be.

will not pass away from the creation of the world up to its end. For he is at hand and at work, because he does not receive a beginning of his working before the time of days, but he begins with the creation and will pass away with the creation. The Word that was before the creation, however, will not pass away with the creation.³⁴⁸

55 'But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son, but the Father alone.'³⁴⁹

These words appear to disprove those who claim to comprehend the things about the consummation and corruption of the world and preach 'as if the day of the Lord were at hand'. Some such people are said to have been at Thessalonica in the time of the apostle, about whom he writes: 'And we ask you, brothers, as far as regards the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering in him, that you not be quickly moved from your understanding nor be disturbed by spirit, or word, or letter as if from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand'.³⁵⁰ Perhaps, because there were some among the Jews who were professing either that they knew about the times of the consummation from the Scriptures or from secret writings he, therefore, writes these words teaching his disciples that they should believe no one who professed to know such things. And the Saviour himself, according to this passage, joins those ignorant of that day and hour. It is reasonable to ask how he who is confident that he knows the Father, when he says, 'No one knows the Father except the Son and the person to whom the Son shall wish to reveal him',³⁵¹ knows the Father but does not know the day and hour of the consummation, and why the Father hides this from the Son. There certainly ought to be a reason that the time of the consummation should be hidden even from the Saviour and he be ignorant of it.

But someone will dare to say that the human being who is in the Saviour is understood as advancing 'in wisdom, stature and grace before God and men'.³⁵² He who was advancing was advancing indeed over all others in knowledge and wisdom, but not so that he had already attained perfection before he should fulfil his own proper dispensation. Therefore, there is nothing strange if, out of all things, it is only this he does not know, that is the day and hour of the consummation. But perhaps also the statement about him not knowing the day and hour of the consummation was made before his own dispensation, because 'no one knows, neither the angels nor the Son, but the Father alone'; but after the dispensation was completed he by no means said this, after 'God highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name'.³⁵³ For afterwards

³⁴⁸ Greek fragment: For the Word of the things that have come to be does not pass away although the things themselves pass away. Vogt (1993) 190-1, n. 119 suggests that the Latin translator either misunderstood or mistranslated the last two sentences in the Latin text above.

³⁴⁹ Mt 24:36.

³⁵⁰ 2 Thess 2:1-2.

³⁵¹ Mt 11:27.

³⁵² Lk 2:52.

³⁵³ Phil 2:9. Greek fragment: But Christ said what is in the saying before the economy, but no longer after the economy, when 'God highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name'.

the Son knew also, receiving the knowledge from the Father even of 'the day and hour' of the consummation, so that no longer does the Father alone know of it but also the Son. And in the Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles 'came together they asked him, saying, Is it now you will restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them: It is not yours to know the times or moments that the Father has placed in his own power.'³⁵⁴ And because he 'placed' 'in his own power the times and moments' of the consummation of the world and of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, therefore, 'no one' could know what God had not yet prescribed.³⁵⁵ And each of those things that he predetermined, he did not predetermine on the basis of having experience of them (for this is impossible), but that which he predetermines, he predetermines when he makes the beginning of what is to be predetermined. And if this is so, he predetermined to bring about a consummation of the world, but he did not also predetermine 'the times and moments' 'which he placed in his own power,'³⁵⁶ so that if he should wish to increase them, when he so determines he may increase them, and if he wishes to abbreviate them he may abbreviate them, since no one knows. Therefore, he placed knowledge about the times and moments of the consummation of the world in his own power, so that consequently when humanity (constituted with its own free will) acts in this way or that he might determine the judgement due. It is possible to discover many things written also in the prophets on the usefulness of giving heed to precepts and threats, as if God is not predetermining anything for them but punishing them if they sin and delivering them if they observe his precepts. And just as in those passages Scripture does not introduce God as predetermining, but speaking in advance for the usefulness of those who give heed, so too is the passage to be understood 'about the day and hour' of the consummation.³⁵⁷

Another explanation (which is better known than these which are now handed down) comments on the words, 'neither the Son, but the Father alone.' The apostle speaks somewhere in this way, it says, about the Saviour and about things appointed at the end of the age: 'And when all things shall have been subjected to him, then also the Son himself will be subjected to him who put all things under him, so that God may be all in all.'³⁵⁸ By these words he appears to indicate that before he subjected all things to him, he had not been subjected 'to him who subjected all things to himself', which shows from this that unless the Son had been subjected to the Father who subjected all things to himself, the Father would never have subjected all things to him. And he appears to say by these words that the subjection of the Son becomes the subjection of all beings who were to be subjected to him and their coming through the Son to God and to perfection. If, therefore, this is said correctly about the

³⁵⁴ Acts 1:6, 7.

³⁵⁵ Reading *praeinitum* with Codex B.

³⁵⁶ See Acts 1:7.

³⁵⁷ Greek fragment: When the Son said he did not know, he hid them for the benefit of the disciples.

³⁵⁸ 1 Cor 15:28.

future subjection of the Son to the Father, so that at that time these who will belong to Christ and cling to him, are subjected to the Father along with Christ himself, shall we explain in a comparable way why no one, not even the Son, knows 'of that day and hour'? For so long as the church, which is the body of Christ,³⁵⁹ does not know that day and hour, so long is the Son himself said not to know that day and hour, so that he is understood to know it at the time that all his members³⁶⁰ also know it.³⁶¹ And he is correctly said to know in the proper meaning of that word, as in its usual usage in the Scriptures. What is it to know? That he who shall have hastened to the end and the shortening of that day and hour shall come to know that day and hour. And that to know and to come to know has some such meaning in the Scriptures is clear from what is said in this way in Ecclesiastes: 'The person who observes the commandment will not know an evil word,' that is that person will have no experience of an evil word.³⁶² And in the apostle it is said of the Saviour himself, 'He made him, who did not know sin, sin for us.'³⁶³ And he spoke of the Saviour not knowing sin as if he spoke of him who had not sinned nor existed in the nature of sin. This is also what the statement means, 'Adam knew his wife Eve.'³⁶⁴ For as long as she was not joined to him, he did not know her.

And 'no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son' of God, the day of this kind of consummation and corruption of the age, when God provides something better for the saints, that they might enter the blessedness that follows the day and hour of that consummation. And just as it is written in Hebrews about those who have testimony in the faith that 'all these attested through faith did not receive the promise of God, since God is providing something better for us, that they not be perfected without us,'³⁶⁵ so one must know also in this, that because God foresees something better for these who were to be saved, those who have not known 'of that day and hour, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son', have not yet received the promise. For the Son prepares knowledge of that day and hour for those who are coheirs of that promise³⁶⁶ of which 'he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,'³⁶⁷ bringing about the way that leads to the restoration of all things.³⁶⁸ This is the reason he took 'the form of a servant,' so that all, at the same time, may know (that is, experience the thing itself) that hour and day, because 'God has prepared

³⁵⁹ See Eph 1:23. ³⁶⁰ See 1 Cor 12:12-27.

³⁶¹ Greek fragment: But another says that just as Paul says, 'Then the Son too will be subjected to the Father,' not as though he was not subjected at one time, but because all his members have not yet been perfected, so since the body of Christ does not know that day or hour, neither, he says, does he know it....

³⁶² Eccl 8:5. Greek fragment: And in the usage of scripture concerning knowing also 'one who observes the commandments will not know misfortune' instead of saying will not suffer it. And 'he made him who did not know sin [to be] sin on our behalf'.

³⁶³ 2 Cor 5:21.

³⁶⁴ Gn 4:1. Greek fragment: And the saying, 'and not the Son' means something like this, and in relation to the statement, 'Adam knew Eve, his wife'.

³⁶⁵ Heb 11:39, 40.

³⁶⁶ See Rom 8:17.

³⁶⁷ Phil 2:7.

³⁶⁸ See Acts 3:21.

for those who love him that which eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has entered the heart of a human being;³⁶⁹ by training in the knowledge of better things and preparing everyone whom he wishes to know that day and hour with the holy angels and with our Lord Jesus Christ himself. But 'the Father alone' knows the consummation of each and every one of the things mentioned above as future, since the Son will come accompanying and preceding those following, and calling (if I may speak in this way) and tarrying so that those who struggle to follow him may be able to follow him and, following him, may be found with him in 'that day and hour'.

56 'For as it was in the days of Noah, so also will the advent of the Son of Man be. For as, in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will be the advent of the Son of Man.'³⁷⁰

For those who know the sequence of the present words, whether they wish to understand it spiritually or simply, it is appropriate to say of the consummation of this world that 'it will be sudden',³⁷¹ like someone already sick with a serious illness that shows his coming demise. For this is shown especially by the fact that he says that 'the advent of the Son of Man' will be like 'the days of Noah', for at that time all things that were on the earth perished suddenly. But the person who wishes to say that the consummation of the world will be gradual will mention likewise what happened 'in the days of Noah'. For since the flood descends for forty days and forty nights,³⁷² it follows that those perished first who lived in the lower regions of the earth, and after them those who lived in the moderate heights, and so last of all those who lived on the highest mountains. So (he says) also at the consummation of the world, when fire shall have descended, it begins from the higher places and gradually descends to the lower. But Luke, adding also the likeness of the fire of the Sodomites, gives us an opportunity to understand that the future consummation is sudden.³⁷³ Someone will say, however, that this makes it clear that neither that flood nor fire was figurative, but occurred because of the abundant sins of humanity.

The future corruption of the world, therefore, is thought of in two ways. In one, related to the moral descent of fire, and in the other, related to the judgment of God. Gentiles, however, do not say that either that conflagration or its cause was sins, but that it was the power of fire. But the divine words teach that all things are held and governed by God and they do not blame the ferocity of

³⁶⁹ 1 Cor 2:9. Greek fragment: Now he prepares in advance the knowledge of the day and hour for those inheriting the promise for which 'he emptied himself', in order that all, because of whom he took up the 'form of a servant', may know the things of the day and hour, 'which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered the heart of a human being, the things that God has prepared for those who love him'.

³⁷⁰ Mt 24:37-9.

³⁷¹ See Lk 19:11.

³⁷² See Gn 7:11, 12.

³⁷³ See Lk 17:29, 30.

fire, but declare that it was the will of God who indeed saves those on the earth who are worthy of salvation, and destroys those in whom 'love has grown cold' because of the abundance of iniquity.³⁷⁴ The comparison with the fire on the Sodomites teaches very clearly that the corruption of the world will be sudden, because the angel said to Lot, 'Behold, I have had regard for your person in this matter, so that I will not destroy the city of which you have spoken. Hurry, therefore, to be saved there, for I will not be able to do anything until you go there.'³⁷⁵ You see that that fire which was sent on Sodom was restrained by the divine will until Lot entered Segor. So, I think it will also be at the consummation (in accord with the fact that Lot too was saved), in order that then that fire of consummation may take possession of the world in accordance with the judgement of God, when the just who have been saved shall shine 'like the sun in the kingdom of his Father'. At that time 'they will gather the unjust from the kingdom of Christ and send them into the furnace of fire.'³⁷⁶

How is it not clear that the corruption of the world will be sudden, because it says: 'They will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage', which are signs of peace and safety? For famine and pestilence will perhaps precede some time of consummation, but in respect to this particular consummation there will be neither famine nor war, and how are 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage', planting and building, buying and selling to be understood if it has not been so appointed?³⁷⁷ But that which the apostle says also shows this: 'Because the day of the Lord will so come as a thief in the night, when they shall have said, Peace and security, then sudden ruin will come on them, like the pain of birth on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.'³⁷⁸ For he teaches us that the day of the consummation will come on human beings suddenly and unexpectedly, when circumstances will appear to have taken a turn for the better, from previous famine to plenty, from pestilence and wars to peace and safety.

But those who listen to the Gospel at a more profound level and do all things, so that no part of the Gospel at all is veiled to them,³⁷⁹ have no great concern about the general consummation of the age, whether it will be sudden and general or in part, but they consider this alone, that the consummation of each person occurs when one knows neither the day nor the hour of one's death, and that 'the day of the Lord will thus come as a thief' on each of us.³⁸⁰ For this reason it is necessary to watch, whether in the evening (that is in youth), or at midnight (that is in the middle of the dark human life), or at cock crow (when one is already old), or early (when one has now advanced into old age),³⁸¹ so that when God the Word shall have come announcing the consummation of the departure of that life, a person may be discovered who did not give 'sleep' to his 'eyes' nor 'rest' to his 'eyelids', and who observed the commandment of

³⁷⁴ See Mt 24:12.

³⁷⁸ 1 Thess 5:2, 3.

³⁷⁵ Gn 19:21, 22.

³⁷⁹ See 2 Cor 4:3.

³⁷⁶ Mt 13:43, 41, 42.

³⁸⁰ See 1 Thess 5:2.

³⁷⁷ See Lk 17:28.

³⁸¹ See Mk 13:35.

him who says, 'Watch at all times.'³⁸² Nevertheless, all people are vain, whether those who profess that they know when the consummation of the world will be, or those who boast that they know the end of their own life, having been deceived either by the signs of birds, or ventriloquists, or magicians, and think they know the day and hour of their own death. For as it is, no one can know, unless perhaps there shall be some prophet enlightened by the Holy Spirit, as the one who prophesied to the wife of the king who wanted to know if his son would arise from his illness, and as Elijah prophesied to Ahaziah telling him what had been appointed for him by the Lord, 'Thus says the Lord, Is it because there was no God in Israel that you go to Baal, the fly god of Ekron? Not so; You will not descend from the bed on which you ascended, because you will certainly die.'³⁸³

Although we have said these things in a digression, nevertheless we introduced them as useful items because, even though many may profess to know such things, no one can know about the consummation of each person (that is about the day of his death) unless perhaps those who have heard from the prophets. I know also of another consummation of a just person who is able to say with the progress of an apostle, 'But may I not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.'³⁸⁴ For the person to whom the world has been crucified has already experienced a kind of consummation of the world, and the day of the Lord comes to the person (who has passed beyond the day that is not of the Lord) who is dead to the things of the world, in that day in which the advent of the Son of Man occurs in his soul because he no longer lives in sin and in the world.³⁸⁵

57 'Then two will be in the field, one will be taken and the other will be left; two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken and the other will be left; two will be in one bed, one will be taken and the other will be left.'³⁸⁶

Just as in the words, 'Either make the tree evil and its fruits evil, or make the tree good and its fruit good',³⁸⁷ there are two trees in general in the hearts of people, either a good tree of virtue or a bad tree of evil, so for the person for whom 'the field is the world',³⁸⁸ according to a certain parable, there are, in general, 'two' [kinds of ³⁸⁹] people in it, 'one' indeed, like Noah, is 'a farmer of the earth', and the 'other', like Cain, 'works the earth'.³⁹⁰ Since such people have been appointed 'in the field' of this world, 'one will be taken', that is the one who is 'a farmer of the earth' like Noah, and 'the other will be left', that is the one who is like Cain and 'works the earth'. And 'everyone who hates his brother'

³⁸² See Ps 131:4; Lk 21:36.

³⁸³ 4 Kgs 1:6. Greek fragment: For the end of the death of each only God knows and the one who has the Spirit of God, as Samuel speaks of Saul's, and Elijah of Ahaziah's.

³⁸⁴ Gal 6:14.

³⁸⁵ See Rom 6:2.

³⁸⁶ Mt 24:40-1.

³⁸⁷ Mt 12:33.

³⁸⁸ Mt 13:38.

³⁸⁹ My addition.

³⁹⁰ See Gn 9:20; 4:2.

is such, and the apostle John calls him a 'murderer' because he hates his brother.³⁹¹ And so too of the souls grinding in the heavy 'mill' of the world, certainly the good things of the body 'will be taken', but the bad 'will be left', until they become worthy to be taken. Or also: there are 'two in the field', the understanding of the good person and that of the evil person; the good understanding 'will be taken' and the evil 'will be left'.³⁹² For we cannot say that the spirit of an evil man is not taken because I have learned in Ecclesiastes that every spirit 'returns to God who gave it',³⁹³ just as also all flesh returns to the earth from which it was taken.³⁹⁴ In the same way the Lord himself taught us that we should fear 'him who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna',³⁹⁵ and (because he did not mention the spirit) it shows clearly that the spirit is not punished along with the sinful body or soul. For the person who has sinned is divided, and part 'of him' is placed 'with the unfaithful',³⁹⁶ but what does not belong to that 'is returned to God who gave it'.

58 'Two will be in one bed, one will be taken and the other will be left'.³⁹⁷

Besides those two who are in the field, and besides those two women who are at the mill, there are 'two' bodies in one material substance from which bodies the one body that 'is taken' is that of a just person and the other body of the same material substance that 'will be left' is that of an unjust person. And the body, indeed as if it were ill, is 'in a bed' of carnal passions, although it is taken; but the soul because, of the many things that it endured in this world, grinds in the mill of the world, and the understanding is in the field, as we explained those things, working at the things it works at.

59 'Watch, therefore, because you do not know at what hour your Lord will come'.³⁹⁸

Giving neither 'sleep to the eyes' of our soul nor 'rest to the eyelids'³⁹⁹ let us expect either our end or that of the age, whether it is that we should be removed from this life or that this world should be brought to an end for us.⁴⁰⁰ But someone will ask, How does the Lord who is present, being beside the disciples, say to them as if he is not present but will come, 'Watch, because you do not know at what hour your Lord will come'. The person of the simpler sort will say it is because he made this statement about coming in the second advent. But another will say that he was speaking of the intelligible and future coming of the Word in the understanding of the disciples, because he was not yet in their understanding as he would be, because (just as it is shown in this

³⁹¹ 1 Jn 3:15.

³⁹² Greek fragment: Or the two in the field are in the ruling principle, and the mind of the excellent person and that of the bad, and of the souls of those grinding in the heavy mill of the world, there the beautiful and good is taken and the bad is left as being unworthy.

³⁹³ Eccles 12:7.

³⁹⁴ See Gn 3:19.

³⁹⁵ Mt 10:28.

³⁹⁶ See Lk 12:46.

³⁹⁷ Mt 24:41, Codex Bezae.

³⁹⁸ Mt 24:42.

³⁹⁹ See Ps 131:4.

⁴⁰⁰ Greek fragment: One must understand especially the meaning of these following words not to be about the general end, but about that of each person.

passage) his advent in the soul of those who are enlightened by the true light⁴⁰¹ of his coming to their souls is working in those watching for the day.⁴⁰² 'But know this, that if the father of the family had known at what watch the thief would come, he would certainly have watched and not permitted his house to be broken into.'⁴⁰³ How 'would he not permit it'? No doubt by his watchfulness. 'Therefore, you also be prepared, because the Son of Man will come in a watch you do not expect.'⁴⁰⁴ Matthew leaves it indefinite, but Mark even defines the time of day, as it were, when the thief will come, when he says, 'Watch, therefore, because you do not know when the Lord of the house will come, whether late, at midnight, at cock crow, or early morning.'⁴⁰⁵ Now the 'father of the family' of the 'house' is the human understanding, and the 'house' is its soul, but I think the 'thief' who comes unexpectedly when the father of the family is sleeping and breaks into the 'house', is the devil or the entire word that is in opposition in accordance with what the evangelist John teaches us when he says: 'Truly, truly I say to you, he who does not enter through the gate into the sheepfold but climbs up another way, is a thief and a robber.'⁴⁰⁶ Therefore, just as he who 'enters through the gate into the sheepfold is the shepherd of the sheep', to whom 'the gate-keeper opens', and 'he who does not enter through the gate but climbs up another way is a thief and robber', so the 'lord of the house' boldly enters 'through the door' when he wishes, to reward the vigilant. The 'thief', however, as a thief, does not use the natural entrance into the house, that is the soul of the negligent, but (as one who has already broken into it) first destroys some natural structures of that soul and the natural understandings which the Word of God had constructed in the one who is not vigilant.⁴⁰⁷ And when the thief has entered through that destruction, he plunders the soul, disarming the understanding, and when he spoils the father of the family who is not vigilant, 'he will distribute his spoils.'⁴⁰⁸ But sometimes one comes upon the thief in the act of breaking in and seizes him, as if grasping his arms, and strikes the thief and silences the house-breaker, that is, the discourse, and kills it without any delay, since even killing is not considered murder. But if it was not at his own house but at that of the one who makes all hidden things manifest that someone seized him who was about to steal his goods, and understood him and refuted him (that is, killed him), he has no pardon for death notwithstanding the thief who has been shown up, for he himself will also die.

⁴⁰¹ See Jn 1:9.

⁴⁰² Greek fragment: For these, from whom the general end was far removed, heeded the command to watch, because the coming of the Word that will be in them had not yet occurred in them as it was about to be.

⁴⁰³ Mt 24:43.

⁴⁰⁴ Mt 24:44.

⁴⁰⁵ Mk 13:35.

⁴⁰⁶ Jn 10:1.

⁴⁰⁷ See 1 Pet 2:5. Greek fragment: And when the Lord comes, he enters the house, that is the soul, as master of the house, the mind, but the thief, the opponent, breaks into the guarded thoughts of the soul which the Word has constructed and overthrows the mind so that he may strip it.

⁴⁰⁸ Lk 11:22.

And see if perhaps the law of Moses means something like this when it says, 'And if a thief shall have been discovered in the act of breaking in and is beaten and dies, it is not murder in his case; but if the sun shall have risen on him, he is guilty; he shall die for him.'⁴⁰⁹ For the person who recognizes evil and destroys it in himself before he commits it is the one who seizes and destroys it in him while it was breaking in. But once someone has committed evil, even though he shall have refuted it outside himself and be seen to have seized the evil and to have killed it outside his house, he profits nothing for he has become answerable for a death. For the divine understanding within us illuminates like a light every person who has returned to himself after he has sinned so that we may understand the evil we have committed as an example for us, but not for our salvation. Nevertheless, in this text of the Gospel about which we are speaking, the 'thief' does not 'come' in the day when the soul of the diligent person is illuminated by the sun of justice,⁴¹⁰ but in the night and at the time when evil is still lurking.⁴¹¹ At whatever time it might be, anyone can, even if he not have the power of the sun, nevertheless be illuminated by some modest brightness of the word which is a 'lamp' still shining now among the evils,⁴¹² and hold fast to his intention for better things and to his vigilance, taking care that his intention for better things not be broached. For just as we read in the *Shepherd*, one does not immediately taste a full jar, for it is not easily soured; but partially filled jars are frequently tasted because they are thought to be soured easily.⁴¹³

And consider if you can refer this which is written elsewhere to the following interpretation, 'But let your loins be girded and your lamps burning; and you be like people awaiting their lord, when he shall return.'⁴¹⁴ Is it possible that one who is not yet in the light and in the day of virtues, but is now presenting himself to the teaching to illumine his soul, and has been girded with the first elements and is turning himself from the profusion of evil, does not yet enjoy the bright light, as it were, of the day of virtue, but that lamp with which even one who is in evil can be illuminated?

This person, therefore, whose lamp is thus lit, is awaiting his Lord, God the Word, so that when he returns he may come to him who meanwhile has had the lamp in himself and has illumined his whole mind, like the sun, of course. And each person lights a lamp from the light of knowledge, whether lesser or greater depending on his own progress, and pours oil into it by spiritual reflection, and in the same way, being vigilant against sinful works, hopes by abstention of this kind and spiritual meditation to receive the Lord into himself. It is

⁴⁰⁹ Ex 22:2, 3. ⁴¹⁰ See Mal 4:2.

⁴¹¹ The Gospel text Origen alludes to appears to be Mk 13:35.

⁴¹² See Ps 118:105. Greek fragment: And everyone whom the word enlightens (although not as the sun, but as a lamp) being watchful, ought to watch the lamp of the Lord carefully at the time of its setting, whether this occurs for him at his departure from this life or at the end of this age.

⁴¹³ *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 12.5.3.

⁴¹⁴ Lk 12:35, 36.

appropriately said, nevertheless, to that person who is progressing very abundantly and is indeed forgetting former things,⁴¹⁵ that is evil, but still has a small amount in himself and is now approaching virtue, 'The night has advanced and the day has approached.'⁴¹⁶ But it is to be noticed that it did not say, 'And the day' is at hand.⁴¹⁷ For it is at hand for those who are perfect and have no vestige of night in themselves, but it is approaching the one who is progressing towards the better and is reflecting on things that belong to the day and is acquiring integrity as in the day,⁴¹⁸ and it is already at hand for that person who is such that he may say, 'We are not of the night nor of darkness.'⁴¹⁹

60 Now since we are coming to this passage just once, we ought also to explain the different watches. One indeed is understood to watch immediately, in that very evening and to continue watching up to midnight, and further up to cockcrow, and in addition until early morning.⁴²⁰ For at the very time that someone might begin evil, that is, at the very time that an infant might utter full speech (for from the time that one begins to be evil he is henceforth in the night), if he should deliver himself immediately so that he becomes a hearer and a doer of the law,⁴²¹ 'if indeed he shall remain until the end'⁴²² in that very purpose, he has watched from evening and continued on to midnight, and has not given 'sleep to his eyes'⁴²³ even up to cockcrow or early morning. Such a person will be counted among the blessed servants. And the person who has been found to have passed some part of the night 'in rioting and drunkenness and shameful activities in bedrooms',⁴²⁴ after the time he is able to speak fully, but shall have begun to watch afterwards will also have good hope if he shall have remained up to early morning, beginning to watch from midnight, that is from his adulthood. And if one who is advanced in his physical age hears the divine teaching and accepts the lamplight from it as if he wishes to live according to the command of God, that person too, having the lamplight from cockcrow and watching and remaining up to early morning, does not lose the reward of good service in his brief time. And is it possible, that even on the spot, about the end of the night (that is after evil shall have consumed nearly the whole span of one's life) that one should believe and light a lamp for oneself and watch even for the time that remains? And when the lord of the house shall come with his grace, he will linger with some from evening until early morning, and with others from midnight, illuminating them in the remaining time, and with others from cockcrow, spending less time with them, but he will not even forsake completely those who light their lamp early in the morning and watch because they are awaiting the lord, but also when he finds those who sleep least and do not give attention 'to shameful activities in bedrooms',⁴²⁵ he will honour them with the honour he knows they deserve.

⁴¹⁵ See Phil 3:13.⁴¹⁶ Rom 13:12.⁴¹⁷ See 2 Thess 2:2.⁴¹⁸ See Rom 13:13.⁴¹⁹ 1 Thess 5:5.⁴²⁰ See Mk 13:35.⁴²¹ See Rom 2:13.⁴²² See Mt 24:13.⁴²³ Ps 131:4.⁴²⁴ Rom 13:13.⁴²⁵ See Rom 13:13.

And the 'thief', therefore, approaches at some 'watch' and hour of the night and breaks into the 'house' of him whom he did not find watching or having a lamp lit. And he appears at some houses unexpectedly in the evening, but at others at midnight, and at some at cockcrow, but there are also those where he appears in early morning. And the Lord 'comes' at some 'watch' and hour of the night. Perhaps the Lord 'comes' to the person to whom the 'thief' was able to do nothing when he came, meaning, of course, that he was not permitted 'to break into the house' because he was watching and had his lamp lit.⁴²⁶ But the Lord does not come to the person whose house was broken into, especially if it was someone who had learned what was said: 'Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning; and be like people awaiting their lord' and, despising those words which were said, gave 'sleep to his eyes and rest to his eyelids.'⁴²⁷ But let us use the following example that occurs to us to clarify the meaning of this passage. The 'thief' is especially likely to come in a time of temptation or calamity of some kind, wishing to break into the 'house' of the soul. When the thief comes, however, the person who shall endure the things that happen and suffer all things because of his love of God will see the Lord immediately coming to him, having suffered nothing from the thief. But the person whose house the thief breaks into in a time of calamity will not be able to look at his Lord when he comes to him because he is unworthy.

61 'For who is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has appointed over his house to give them their food in season?'⁴²⁸

It is obvious that that parable refers to the apostles and the other bishops and teachers, especially since in Luke Peter asks, 'Are you speaking that parable to us or also to all?'⁴²⁹ Nevertheless, although there are many stewards,⁴³⁰ it is difficult to discover one who is both faithful and wise. For this reason, the apostle says, 'So let a man think of us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. This, now, is looked for among stewards, that one be found faithful.'⁴³¹ And whoever is a bishop sins against God when he does not minister to his fellow servants as a servant, but as a lord, and frequently also as a harsh lord dominating by power, disposed like the Egyptians who afflicted the life of the children of Israel with force.⁴³² They ought, therefore, to remember the words of Christ who says, 'You call me master and lord, and you speak correctly, for I am. If, therefore, I wash your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another; for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done.' He says this as well, 'The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them and their greater ones exercise power over them. But it shall not be this way among

⁴²⁶ Greek fragment: And perhaps the Lord comes after the thief, and he comes to that person whom the thief avoided because he was watching.

⁴²⁷ Lk 12:35, 36; Ps 131:4.

⁴²⁸ Mt 24:45.

⁴²⁹ Lk 12:41. Greek fragment: And see if the word does not put to shame the bishops and teachers who were entrusted with such things.

⁴³⁰ See Lk 12:42.

⁴³¹ 1 Cor 4:1, 2.

⁴³² See Ex 1:13, 14.

you. The one who wants to be first among you will be last; just as also the Son of Man does not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a redemption for many.⁴³³ And one must also hear Paul saying, 'When we could have been a burden to you, as apostles of Christ, we became little children in your midst, as if a nurse should cherish her offspring; desiring you in such a way that we desired to share with you not only the Gospel but even our own souls.'⁴³⁴ And one ought not strike fellow servants, but 'rebuke the disorderly, comfort the faint-hearted, support the sick, and be patient with all', since 'the servant of God ought not quarrel but be gentle to all, teaching those who resist with discretion.'⁴³⁵ And, as if he were desisting from the evil inclination of his fellow servants who were not such, Paul reproaches those, who were subject to the proud and despised the gentle, in this way, 'You endure it if someone reduces you to servitude, if someone devours you, if someone takes [from you]⁴³⁶, if someone is lifted up, if someone slaps you in the face, as if we were weak.'⁴³⁷

And consider in these words how he has rebuked those who reduce others to servitude and strike them in the face, because they rule very harshly, when he says that he refrains from these things, not because he is too weak to do them, but so that he might practise those things that he teaches. And he teaches to teach 'with modesty those who resist.'⁴³⁸ Wherefore also, defining what sort of people bishops ought to be, he says: 'Not quarrelsome, not strikers, but gentle, orderly', and whatever things are found among 'faithful and wise servants' and stewards, whom 'the Lord has appointed over his family', as Luke says.⁴³⁹ But it is possible to recognize from these words that not only did 'the Lord appoint' those who are 'faithful and wise over his house', but also wicked servants who always say in their hearts, 'My lord delays coming.' Therefore, they strike their fellow servants, and they eat and drink with the drunken or drunkards and are drunk.⁴⁴⁰ If at any time, therefore, those who preside in the church of Christ think that they hold a very high position because 'the Lord' appointed them 'over his family', let them recognize that the fact that the Lord appointed them over 'his' family does not save them. Instead, it is this, 'that' they give them 'food in season' and that they refrain from beatings, and revelling, and drinking-bouts 'with the drunks.'⁴⁴¹ But if they do not refrain from such conduct, and think it something great that 'the Lord appointed' them 'over his family', let them know that their 'Lord will come on a day which' they do 'not' think and 'at an hour which' they do not know, 'and will divide' them, and 'place' their 'part with the hypocrites' and unfaithful, and when they have been placed among the hypocrites and unfaithful, it will profit them nothing that they were appointed by the Lord 'over his family'. And it is fitting to recall what

⁴³³ Jn 13:13-15; Mt 20:25-8.

⁴³⁴ 1 Thess 2:7, 8.

⁴³⁵ 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Tim 2:24, 25.

⁴³⁶ My addition.

⁴³⁷ See 2 Cor 11:20, 21.

⁴³⁸ 2 Tim 2:25.

⁴³⁹ See 1 Tim 3:2, 3; Lk 12:42.

⁴⁴⁰ See Lk 12:42-5.

⁴⁴¹ See Rom 13:13.

Daniel said against the evil elders, that we may fear the words, 'He will divide him': 'The angel of God is holding a sword and will cut you in two', and when he cuts, 'he will divide'.⁴⁴² We have dared to make use of an example from Daniel on this passage, not unaware that it is not placed among the Hebrew writings, but that it is retained in the churches.⁴⁴³ But this is a subject for another time.

And pay attention also to the words, 'faithful and wise servant', listening kindly to the word and assenting to the will of Christ who speaks these words and of Matthew who writes them down. The words about the faithful and wise servant must, therefore, be listened to carefully: The person who advances in the faith or (if he has not yet been perfected) is currently doing so, is called 'faithful', and the person who possesses a natural quickness of mind is also said to be 'wise'. The unjust steward, therefore, 'acted wisely', not indeed acting in accordance with wisdom based on virtues, but because he was swift in his mental powers. And 'the sons of this age are wiser than the sons of light in their generation',⁴⁴⁴ not because they are wise with a wisdom that arises from virtues, or because the sons of light are inferior to them in wisdom in any other respect than in the wisdom of the age or they are inferior in the acuity of the natural mind, for the divine word knows also that there is one wisdom that comes from virtues, just as it teaches in Proverbs, saying, 'Say wisdom is your sister, and make prudence your close friend, that it may preserve you from another's wife'.⁴⁴⁵

But now we ought to listen in general to what is said: 'Who is the faithful and wise servant', as if some, indeed, are faithful in the respect that faith is commonly understood, but they are neither wise nor quick in their mental power, and again others are quick and, in the sense given it here, wise, but not at all also faithful. And if someone should consider the multitude of those who wish to be Christians, he will discover many who are faithful and exercise zeal in faith, but not also wise, so that 'the sons of this age' are 'wiser than them in their generation',⁴⁴⁶ knowing that 'God chose the foolish things of the world that he might confound the wise'.⁴⁴⁷ And again, he will see others who are thought to have believed, being quick and wise, but short on faith and, if not unfaithful, nevertheless less faithful than 'the foolish things of the world' that 'God chose'. And it is extremely rare that 'faithful' and 'wise' come together in one person so that in relation to each one, 'he may give his fellow servants food in season'. For one must, of necessity, have wisdom that one may give food to

⁴⁴² Susanna 59 (Theodotion). Greek fragment: That which is said by Daniel to one of the elders who spoke against the holy Susanna, 'For already the angel of God has received from God, he says. He will cut you in two.' [Origen interpreting this says] This will by all means happen to him in the judgement according to what was said by the Lord, 'And he will cut him in two'.

⁴⁴³ Origen has cited Susanna (55 and 59), one of the three books associated with Daniel in the LXX. For Origen's attitude to the larger canon of the LXX, see Heine (2011).

⁴⁴⁴ Lk 16:8.

⁴⁴⁵ Prov 7:4, 5.

⁴⁴⁶ Lk 16:8.

⁴⁴⁷ 1 Cor 1:27.

the needy 'in season', but there must be faith so that one not take away food in time of need.

It is not inopportune to issue a warning related to sins that usually occur for the most part in people who appear to believe in Christ and in the administrators of churches, since even in the simple understanding we common people have need that we be equally 'faithful' and 'wise' in dispensing the revenue of the church. We need to be 'faithful' indeed so that we not devour what belongs to the widows and 'that we might be mindful of the poor'⁴⁴⁸ and, taking advantage because it is written, 'The Lord appointed that these who preach the Gospel live from the Gospel',⁴⁴⁹ we not ask for more than simple food and necessary garments, so that we not grasp more for ourselves than we give to our brothers who are hungry, thirsty, and unclothed and to those who are experiencing need in the cares of the age.⁴⁵⁰ And we need to be 'wise' so that we may provide for each according to the merit of each, remembering the words, 'Blessed is he who understands about the needy and the poor'.⁴⁵¹ For it is not reasonable simply to give from things belonging to the church, and to be careful to observe this one thing, that we not devour the things that belong to the poor or commit theft from them. We must wisely understand the causes of their needs, why they are needy, and the merit of each, how one was raised, how great a need one has, or why one is in need. Those, therefore, who were raised in harsh and meagre circumstances from infancy are not to be treated in the same way as those who were fed bountifully and luxuriously and later fell. Men and women are not to receive the same ministrations, or should there be much for the elderly and young, or for the young indeed and disabled (for which reason they cannot acquire food for themselves), and for those who partially, at least, can provide for themselves. And one must inquire also if they have several sons who do not neglect them but do many things and are not contently looking out for themselves. And so as not to prolong our discourse, the one who wishes to dispense the revenues of the church properly needs much wisdom that he may also be proven 'blessed', having been found 'a faithful and wise steward' in those matters.

But perhaps also because there are so many Christians, and those who are inadequate in respect to examining the word have also, as such, been elevated to the highest position, we have the greater necessity to hear the words, 'Who is the faithful and wise servant whom the lord has appointed over his family, to give them food in season?', so that they, wishing to demonstrate that they are wise, not squander the reasonable and spiritual 'food' on simply any 'fellow servants' whatsoever and on those for whom it is not appropriate. These have a greater need for the word that establishes their habits and forms their life than for that which leads to wisdom and illuminates with the light of knowledge

⁴⁴⁸ See Mk 12:40; Gal 2:10.

⁴⁵⁰ See Mt 25:35-8; Mk 4:19.

⁴⁴⁹ 1 Cor 9:14.

⁴⁵¹ Ps 40:1.

those whose mind can bear the brightness of this kind of light. On the other hand, one must not be annoyed to expound deeper meaning to those capable of hearing more acutely, lest those who expound paltry things be despised by the more talented, who are either naturally talented or are esteemed to be acute, perhaps, by reason of training in the wisdom of the age.⁴⁵² It is difficult, therefore, to find both in one person, that one should be both 'wise and faithful', but it is not impossible, for he does not pronounce one blessed who cannot exist when he says, 'Blessed is that servant whom the lord shall find so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will appoint him over all his goods'.

62 'Blessed is that servant whom his lord shall find so doing when he comes.'⁴⁵³

A great promise is announced to faithful and wise stewards. They are with those to whom he says, 'Have authority over five cities,' or, 'Have authority over ten cities.'⁴⁵⁴ For what else does being made father of the family 'over all goods' mean other than to be 'heirs of God and coheirs of Christ' and reigning together with Christ to whom the Father has given all things just as he says, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'.⁴⁵⁵ And having been appointed (as Son of the good Father) over all the Father's substance, he shares this kind of dignity and glory with his faithful and wise stewards, that they too might be over every creature and power, that they might be with Christ. And take note of the interpretation of the words, 'Truly I say to you, that he will appoint him over all his goods'. Think with me (to use an example) of some king who has an entire kingdom under him, in which there are many nations, cities, and various places. Accordingly, he divides the whole of his kingdom among satraps and other princes who have accomplished something outstanding, and 'he appoints' all of them 'over' his entire kingdom, but not one individual over the whole, but each of them over some part of his kingdom, for example, one over ten cities and another over five. And so, they will all be 'over all his goods', but he alone would hold all things as if he alone is king of all things. And this is what the words mean, 'He will appoint him over all his goods'.

And in the same way that we have listened to the words about the blessedness to be given to faithful and wise servants, so let us listen also to those about the torments of the wicked servants. 'The wicked servant' says 'in his heart', preferring his present pleasure to future good things and despising his lord, 'My lord delays his coming'. He says this to deceive himself, wishing to eat and drink 'with the drunken'.⁴⁵⁶ And he lives in a dream-world because after a long time his lord will come. And, as if his lord were delaying, he beats his suffering 'fellow servants', reduces them to servitude, and slaps them in the face, and when he beats them, 'he eats and drinks with the drunken', on the pretext of clerical service, and he does not receive the hungry but feasts 'with the drunken'. There are many like this to whom the care of the church has been

⁴⁵² See 1 Cor 3:19.

⁴⁵³ Mt 24:46.

⁴⁵⁴ Lk 19:17, 19.

⁴⁵⁵ Rom 8:17; Mt 28:18.

⁴⁵⁶ See Mt 24:48, 49.

entrusted. 'The Lord will come' to them, bringing about their end, 'in a day which they do not know and at an hour they do not think', and he who 'is able to destroy soul and body in Gehenna'⁴⁵⁷ 'will divide them'. And he will divide him when 'his spirit returns to God who gave it,'⁴⁵⁸ but the soul goes with his body 'into Gehenna'. The just person, however, is not divided, but his soul goes with the spirit to the heavenly kingdoms. Therefore it is written, 'Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the just'.⁴⁵⁹ But those who are divided and who put aside the spirit that returns to him who gave it also soon have no 'part' that was from God in themselves. That part of them remains that was their own, that is the soul, along with the body, which, when the Lord comes, he will punish in torments 'with the hypocrites' and 'the unfaithful'.⁴⁶⁰

Notice, therefore, the difference between the servants 'the Lord appointed over his house'. Some, indeed, as faithful and wise stewards who gave 'food to their fellow servants in season', are appointed 'over all the goods' of the father of the family. But the servants who did things opposite to those, in addition to the fact that they have fallen from such great glory are, furthermore, divided and their part is placed 'with the hypocrites' and the unfaithful. 'There will be weeping' for those who laugh in an evil manner in this world, since the Scripture says, 'Woe to you who laugh now, because you will weep and beat your breasts'.⁴⁶¹ And consequently, because of the rest and relaxation which they have enjoyed, the 'gnashing of teeth' will be reasonable for them. This perhaps indicates that those who are punished, thinking it will be the end of grief and for this reason wishing to bear up like a man,⁴⁶² compelled by intolerable torments, gnash their teeth—those teeth, of course, with which they ate the bitterness of evil, and for which reason they deserve the gnashing 'of teeth'.

⁴⁵⁷ Mt 10:28.

⁴⁵⁸ Eccl 12:7. Greek fragment: The cutting in two is that 'the spirit returns to God who gave it, but the soul, with what is called body in the gospel, departs 'into Hades'.

⁴⁵⁹ Dan 3:86.

⁴⁶⁰ See Lk 12:46.

⁴⁶¹ Greek fragment: They are weeping, therefore, instead of laughing.

⁴⁶² Greek fragment: And they will gnash their teeth, thinking it is the end of pain and the excess of punishment, as if they wish to bear them nobly.

Series 63–73 (Matthew 25)

63 'Then the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bride and bridegroom. But five of them were foolish and five were wise'.¹

The 'kingdom of heaven' is compared to 'ten virgins' in all, who have come to know the Word of God. And if, in fact, there are among them some who believe and live correctly and are, therefore, justly compared to the five wise virgins, and others who profess faith in Jesus but do not prepare themselves for salvation by good works, it is not unreasonable to say that they are the understandings of all who have learned divine teachings in whatever way they have received the Word of God, 'whether in pretext or in truth',² since virgins are made virgins by the Word of God in whom they have believed or wish to believe.³ For the Word of God is such that he applies some of his purity to all who have withdrawn from the worship of idols or the worship of the elements of God's creation and who, through Jesus Christ, have come to the worship of God, although they have not followed works of piety nor prepared themselves for blessedness. And just as, according to the Word of truth,⁴ the virtues, which are the substance, that is, Christ, adhere to themselves the one or the other,⁵ so that the person who shall have had one has all, and the person who shall have too little of one does not have one at all (for Christ is not withdrawn from himself). In the same way, all the senses adhere to one another. Wherever one of the senses concerning the correct teaching of the Word is inadequate, there all the senses in general, as if defrauded, are made foolish by the Word of wisdom. I am using the word senses both of those which are commonly understood as senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch—and of those which are called divine in Proverbs, where it says, 'You will discover the

¹ Mt 25:1–2. ² Phil 1:18.

³ Greek fragment: He says the ten virgins are the perceptions in each soul which have broken away from idolatry to receive, 'whether in pretext or in truth' the pure Word of God and have been made virgins.

⁴ See 2 Cor 6:7.

⁵ Greek fragment: ... which also reciprocally adhere as the virtues to the substance of Christ.

divine sense'.⁶ And again, because the Word of God is the cause that the right use of the senses occurs and it is not possible, since He is in the senses,⁷ that He should be at work in some of them and be diligently conferring things that belong to his sagacity, but fail to do this in others. If, therefore, he has made one of the senses wise so that it is constituted a virgin, it is necessary that he also pour his wisdom forth in the other senses. Therefore, it is not possible to see some of the five senses in someone to be foolish and some wise. All 'five' must either be wise, or all 'foolish'.⁸ All those senses take their 'lamps', that is, their natural instruments, whether wishing to use them in accordance with the Word of God or even contrary to the will of God,⁹ nevertheless they take them when they welcome the bridegroom of the church to be the Word of God and the Son of God. They depart from the world and the errors of many gods, and they go 'to meet' the Saviour, who is always prepared to go to his virgins, so that he might enter the church the blessed bride accompanied by the deserving virgins.¹⁰ But as long as the lamp of the faithful shines 'before men' after the Word has been received 'so that they see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven',¹¹ these are the 'wise' who take oil as fuel for their lamp, that is, the Word of doctrine, which is always poured on good actions,¹² and they fill the vessels of their souls from this Word from instructors and teachers who sell that which is sufficient for them even if the departure is delayed and the Word lingers and comes at the time of their consummation, so that they hasten there, perfected and situated beyond the world. But the 'foolish' are all who had no concern after they began to be Christians to take as much instruction from the Word as would suffice for them to endure until the end, and who neglected the reception of teaching that would reinforce their faith, and the lamp of good actions that would illuminate it (For what is so reinforcing as a moral discourse that is called the oil of the lamp?). These took lamps lit, indeed, at first, but 'they did not take oil' for so great a journey when they went forth to meet the bridegroom. 'But while the bridegroom tarried, all the virgins slumbered and slept'.¹³ Thus when the bridegroom tarries and the Word does not come immediately at the end of their life, they suffer something

⁶ Prov 2:5. In the preceding sentence the Latin word 'sensus' has the meaning 'understanding', which is one of its common meanings. I have rendered it 'senses' to show the connection between that statement and this.

⁷ Koetschau indicates a lacuna at this point.

⁸ Greek fragment: And there are those commonly understood and those that occur in Proverbs, wherefore also in the group of five there are not foolish and wise, but if one, then all.

⁹ Greek fragment: ... and the lamps, the instruments of those who live correctly and in accord with the Word or in an opposite manner.

¹⁰ And those who had received the mystery of Christ and the church went out to meet; for they have gone out from the error of the world to the one who eagerly hastens to them.

¹¹ Mt 5:16.

¹² Greek fragment: The Logos of the spiritual person who performs the good action is poured on like oil.

¹³ Mt 25:5.

because they are senses and act in the night of the world and are drowsy. They slept, indeed (as they were relaxed and destitute of that vital sense), but they did not lose their lamps nor despair of the preservation of their oil.¹⁴

64 'And at midnight there was a cry, Behold, the bridegroom is coming, rise up to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and fixed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out. But the wise answered and said, No, lest there not be enough for us and you; go rather to the vendors and buy for yourselves. But when they went off to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the wedding. And the door was shut. And finally, the remaining virgins came and said: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you'.¹⁵

'And at midnight', that is, at the peak of relaxation, and the in-between time, when the evening light has ended and that of the day is still awaited, 'there was a cry' of the angels (in my opinion) that all who are ready arise. They are all 'ministering spirits who are sent to minister because of those who are about to possess salvation',¹⁶ and they are anxious to awaken those who have sense perception 'to meet' the bridegroom, and they say in the heart as they call to the senses of all those who are sleeping, 'Behold the bridegroom is coming; arise to meet him'. All, indeed, got the report that they must go 'to meet' the bridegroom, the Word and the unstained church, and 'arose', but they did not all apply the proper preparation to their lamps, but only those who listened to the good sense with which they were equipped.

So, at an inopportune moment 'the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil', as if they were people who lacked good sense and did not understand that all who have oil cannot also give some of it to others who want it. Only those can do this who have been positioned that they might sell, confer, and receive the price for the oil that is sold. Its price is perseverance, constant attention, love of learning, diligence, and the labour of those who desire to learn.¹⁷

'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out'. Even though they were 'foolish', they, nevertheless, understood that they ought to go 'to meet' the bridegroom with light, having all the lamps of their senses lit. And they also perceived that because they had too little rational 'oil' their lamps would be obscured even as darkness approached. But the wise send the foolish off to the oil vendors because they see that they have not gathered enough 'oil', that is the Word of doctrine, that 'it might suffice' both for life for themselves

¹⁴ Greek fragment: Those who have departed from the tension of life are sleeping; the wise do not, indeed, destroy their lamps nor are they inattentive to the guarding of the oil.

¹⁵ Mt 25:6-12.

¹⁶ Heb 1:14. Greek fragment: The angels, that is the 'ministering spirits sent forth to serve because of those about to inherit salvation', call out to the sleeping senses, awakening them.

¹⁷ Greek fragment: And the teachers sell the oil for the price of close attention, diligence, love of learning, zeal, love of hard work.

and that they might teach the foolish to fit out their lamps. And if you have ever considered anyone who has gathered enough teaching of the Word to suffice for himself to live well, it does not follow, nevertheless, that this person is able to become a teacher. You will see such a person responding to those wishing to learn the things of God from him and saying: 'No, lest it not be sufficient for us and for you,' for I possess the teaching of the Word that is sufficient for me to live well, but it is not sufficient that I can also provide it for you. And they will respond to those wishing to learn from themselves: 'Go rather to the vendors and buy for yourselves,' that is, to the teachers and receive from them.¹⁸ And because the 'foolish' go to purchase teaching for themselves when the time is not right for this, they miss the time for going in 'to the wedding' with the bridegroom.¹⁹ And it is possible to see those who suffer such things, who, when they ought to learn, neglect to learn anything beneficial from those from whom they ought to learn; at the very end of their life, however, then they wish to learn.²⁰ These people are seized by death and, therefore, do not enter with the Word to the bride, the church, nor with Christ to those who, at the same time, will be at rest and will rule in blessedness. The 'door,' however is closed after that, while the foolish virgins will still be getting oil. These same virgins, for no reason, will come after that and say: 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' The bridegroom, therefore, 'will respond' and say: 'I do not know you.'

Because, therefore this parable was addressed to all listeners, he adds and says to his disciples, 'Watch, therefore, because you do not know the day and the hour.' And the lamps of the senses are prepared by practices that belong to the gospel and are right, so that the preparation of the eyes might be the right practice for seeing, that the eyes may see the Maker who is to be admired, but be closed 'that they not see iniquity.'²¹ The hearing, moreover, is prepared whenever someone does not accept vain hearsay, but 'closes his ears that they not hear a judgement of blood,' and hears Jesus saying to him, 'Be opened,' so that the ears may be offered only to words that are wholesome and necessary.²² And someone can say the same things of the preparation of the taste, the sense of smell, and touch in accordance with what has been said, since there is no preparation in eyes, ears, or the remaining senses for those who use their senses wickedly.²³ And it must be observed that it is written that the foolish

¹⁸ Greek fragment: For there are many who possess enough doctrine for the use of daily living, but not so that they also teach others.

¹⁹ Greek fragment: But those who do not purchase the rational oil at the right time truly lose the entrance to the wedding with the bridegroom.

²⁰ Greek fragment: Those who begin to learn at the time of their death are the likes of these.

²¹ Is 33:15.

²² Ibid.; Mk 7:34.

²³ Greek fragment: The usage of the gospel in relation to the senses is the adornment of the lamps, of the eyes to marvel at the Maker and to shut them 'so that they not see injustice'; and of the hearing, not to receive a vain word nor 'a judgement of blood,' but the words of Jesus; and of taste, the eating of Christ, the Lord; and of smell, the good odor of Christ (2 Cor 2:15) and the enjoyment of the poured forth myrrh (Cant 1:3); and of touch, touching the word, as John says, '[what] our hands have handled concerning the word of life' (1 Jn 1:1).

were sent away to purchase 'oil', but it is not related that they purchased or received it (I pass over this in silence), but afterwards it is said that after this 'the remaining virgins come and say, Lord, Lord, open to us.' Although it had been possible to say: Afterwards they came when the oil had been received or purchased, the text is appropriately silent so that he not say to those who have oil or who prepared their lamps at the last moment: 'I do not know' who you are. Nevertheless, the point of the word is this, that we prepare ourselves for death at any time, that we not give sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids because we do not know the day and the hour of our death.²⁴

65 'For just as a man who is going to be abroad called his servants and delivered his goods to them.'²⁵

And first, indeed, let us see why our Lord is compared to a man travelling abroad. He is our one Lord, of whom the apostle says, 'For to us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him',²⁶ if moreover we are ruled only by him and do not have mammon as lord,²⁷ or another of those lords whom the apostle himself indicates to be many when he says, 'For just as there are many gods and many lords.'²⁸ First, then, let us ask about his travelling, especially because by his travelling he appears to contradict the promise he himself makes to his disciples when he says, 'Where two or three shall be gathered in my name, there I am in their midst',²⁹ and in the same way, this saying: 'Behold I am with you all the days up to the consummation of the age',³⁰ and what the Baptist says about him (showing that he is everywhere), 'And in your midst stands one whom you do not know; he it is who comes after me.'³¹ Therefore, someone will say, If he stands in the midst of those not knowing him, and if he is considered to be among them 'wherever two or three shall be gathered in' his 'name', and if he is with the disciples all the days of their life 'up to the consummation of the age', how is it proposed in this parable that he travels? But as we discuss this we ought also take into account this which Paul says of himself: 'But I, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already passed judgement as present, when you are gathered together and my spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus, deliver him who is such to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.'³² For if the power of Jesus is gathered with these who are gathered in his name, he is not travelling from them but is always present with them. But if he is always present with all his own, how do his parables maintain that he is travelling?

See if we can answer what is being asked in this way. He who says to his disciples, 'Behold I am with you up to the consummation of the age', and again, 'Where two or three shall be gathered in my name, I too am in their midst' et

²⁴ See Ps 131:4. Greek fragment: And the conclusion of the argument is that we be prepared for death at any time.

²⁵ Mt 25:14.

²⁶ 1 Cor 8:6.

²⁷ See Mt 6:24.

²⁸ 1 Cor 8:5.

²⁹ Mt 18:20.

³⁰ Mt 28:20.

³¹ Jn 1:26.

³² 1 Cor 5:3-5.

cetera, and he who stands amid those not knowing him is the only-begotten of God, God the Word, and Wisdom, and Justice, and Truth, and Peace, who is not enclosed in a bodily framework. He does not travel, so far as this nature of his divinity is concerned, but he travels so far as the dispensation of the body that he took up is concerned. In relation to this body he is also troubled and becomes sorrowful, saying, 'Now my soul is troubled'; and again, 'My soul is sorrowful even to death.'³³ But when we say this we do not dissolve the man from the body that was taken up, since it is written in John, 'Every spirit that dissolves Jesus is not from God';³⁴ but we preserve the property of each substance. For if every faithful man 'who is joined to the Lord is one spirit',³⁵ how much more is that man whom Christ assumed according to the dispensation of the flesh not to be dissolved from him nor said to be other than him? And take note of how it says, 'just as a man who is going to be abroad', that he was not a man but 'just as a man', and as a man will travel abroad, who was everywhere so far as his divine nature is concerned. Consider at the same time that that there appears to be no consequent clause in the sentence written as follows: 'just as a man' travelling abroad, so also Jesus, or: so also I, or: so also the Son of man, because it is he himself who is put forward in the parable travelling abroad as a man. For he is not a man who is 'wherever two or three shall be gathered in' his 'name', nor is it a man who is with us 'all the days up to the consummation of the age',³⁶ nor is it a man who is present everywhere with the faithful who are gathered together, but it is the divine power that was in Jesus.

Furthermore, we can say the following about this passage: There is nothing contradictory in Jesus himself being understood in one way to be everywhere, but in another to be travelling about. For if 'while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight)',³⁷ then the Lord too is absent from all those who are in the body and walk 'by faith, not by sight'. But if we shall be with the Lord when we are absent 'from the body',³⁸ then he too will be with us and, because we have walked 'by faith',³⁹ it will come to pass that we will later also walk 'by sight'. But we mean sight of the Word, and Wisdom, and Truth, and Justice, and Peace, and of everything that the only-begotten of God is. And you will understand sight of the Word, and sight of Wisdom, when you will have understood the apostle's words: 'My little children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ be formed in you'.⁴⁰ For when you understand that Christ has been formed in someone, you will also consequently catch sight of Christ in a formation of that kind. He, therefore, who 'as a man set out on a journey abroad, called his servants and delivered to them' his approved money in pure sayings, since his 'sayings' are 'pure sayings, silver that has been refined by fire, proven, cleansed seven times'.⁴¹

³³ Jn 12:27; Mt 26:38.

³⁴ 1 Jn 4:3. The Vulgate reading 'solvit' (disengage), Greek *luet*, appears in a few of the Fathers.

³⁵ 1 Cor 6:17.

³⁶ Mt 18:20; 28:20.

³⁷ 2 Cor 5:6, 7.

³⁸ See 2 Cor 5:8.

³⁹ See 2 Cor 5:7.

⁴⁰ Gal 4:19.

⁴¹ Ps 11:7.

66 'And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability, and he set out on his journey. Immediately the one who had received five talents went out and worked with them and gained five other talents. Likewise, also the one who received two gained another two with them, but the person who received one went out and dug in the earth, and hid his lord's money'.⁴²

Therefore, if you shall ever perceive that some of those who received the management of the sayings of God from Christ have more, both more divine and more abundantly, and others have less and (if I may put it this way) do not even half understand the difficulties in things in comparison with those who are much better, but others have still less, you will perceive the differences between those who have received the sayings of God from Christ, since one was the ability of those to whom 'five talents' were given, another those to whom 'two', another those to whom 'one', and one did not receive the measure of the other. And the one 'who received' the 'one' talent did not receive a contemptible gift, for one talent from such a lord is a lot. Nevertheless, there are three proper servants of him who 'set out on a journey abroad as a man', just as also there are three classes of those who produce fruit, of whom 'some' indeed produce 'a hundred, and some sixty, but some thirty'.⁴³ There, even that one who produced thirty is saved, but here the Word rebukes him 'who' received the 'one talent' and 'hid it' in the 'earth'. And I ask if those who have received 'five' talents can be understood as the more perfect who have accepted a more divine and sublime meaning of Scripture, and those who have received 'two' ascend beyond the letter but only a little beyond it and are unable to ascend to its vastness, and the third are those who understand nothing beyond the letter which they received in their first instructions. There is, therefore, a teaching worthy of such a Saviour as ours in these things that I am saying about the numbers in general, I mean about the five, the two, and the one.

Although we are unpretending, we think we can explain such things in some degree. Is it that perhaps those who can trace all the words of the Scriptures perceptible to the senses to the more divine senses (which Solomon calls divine,⁴⁴ and Jeremiah, 'senses of the heart',⁴⁵ and which Paul, writing to the Hebrews, refers to as 'senses exercised for the discernment of good and evil'⁴⁶) are those who have gained five additional talents beyond the 'five' by working with them and exercising themselves through teaching and raising themselves to greater knowledge? For they, by living beneficially and teaching studiously have worked and gained five others, because no one easily receives an increase of another virtue unless he has some of it already, as for example, being wise, he increases in wisdom, and being faithful, he increases in faith. Or perhaps this is the meaning: He acquired 'five others' because each one teaches another what he himself knows, and he teaches as much as he himself knows, not more.

⁴² Mt 25:15-18.⁴³ Mt 13:23.⁴⁴ Prov 2:5.⁴⁵ Jer 4:19.⁴⁶ Heb 5:14.

Therefore, by teaching another whatever one has in oneself, he acquires this in the other by causing him to have what he himself also has. Therefore, he who had 'five' is not said to have acquired more than the five that he had, and he who had 'two' not more than the two that he had. And if we need to say something about the two talents, we say that those who have not remained with the letter but attempted to ascend to its sense beyond the letter and are not able to reach beyond the order of two things proclaimed are those who have received two 'talents' from him who recognized their ability and have been instructed in a doctrine belonging to the bodily level of interpretation (for the number two is seen to be of the flesh), and have gained two beyond these, that is, learning of a bodily nature and another a little more elevated than it.

But there was one servant possessing less ability for which reason the head of the family gave him 'one' talent as being capable of less. The servant 'took' it, and having some 'land,' 'buried it.' He put it in the depth of the earth when he ought to have dispatched it on high at the money-dealers' tables. And since three servants are mentioned as belonging to that head of the family, I ask if they can carry on business as if they are in control after they have believed and have become his servants. After they have received the money from the head of the family, one 'worked' and 'gained,' and another 'gained,' but another, because of fear and insufficient faith, 'buried' his 'lord's' money and 'hid' it. And this is clear in his defence itself in which he says that he feared his lord⁴⁷ (being afraid of God as another has a 'zeal for God,' 'but not in accord with knowledge'⁴⁸), and being afraid, 'he hid' his talent in the earth. Such are those who do not exert themselves or discuss what is said, or deliver themselves for the benefit of souls, but wish to hide what they have received and have believed. If, therefore, you should ever see someone who has acquired some ability, and has the ability, however small, of speaking and the ability for benefiting souls and he keeps this ability secret (so that he hands on only the bare word that he has believed and accepted as a deposit to him from his Lord) and he lives in obscurity, ignorant even of the multitudes who have great sins, and he does not display what he has received from God for good, although he may have a certain conscientiousness about the way to live that is highly regarded by many, do not hesitate to say that he is like the one who received 'one' talent and 'hid' it in the earth.

But if you are displeased because it is written that such a person as this is sent 'into outer darkness,'⁴⁹ condemned as one who does not use the ability given to him for the benefit of souls because he does not teach, recall the apostolic saying, 'For woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.'⁵⁰ He acknowledges that he will not suffer woe for any blameworthy action in his lifestyle except

⁴⁷ See Mt 25:25.

⁴⁸ Rom 10:2.

⁴⁹ Mt 25:30.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 9:16. Greek fragment: And do not be surprised if one will suffer such things because he did not teach the word, for Paul says, 'For woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel'.

this, that he shall not have preached the gospel. It is quite obvious that even though there were other appropriate qualities in his life, he anticipated hearing, 'Wicked and lazy servant' and the rest,⁵¹ if he had not preached the gospel. These are the kinds of things especially those need to have in mind who put 'their hand'; that is their action, 'to the plough' of teaching the doctrine of Christ, so that by being aware of those for whom the woe is stored up (for no other reason than that they do not teach) they may not turn 'back' after they once put 'their hand to the plough' ploughing the souls of people so that afterwards they may receive the seeds of the Word.

And that man, who 'as a man was going abroad called his servants and delivered to them his goods,' returned after a long time, after he had sent those suitable to negotiate the salvation of souls. And therefore, perhaps one is not easily found from them who will be suited for work of this kind that he might pass over quickly from this life. This is shown from the fact that even the apostles grew old. He says to Peter, one of the apostles, 'When you grow old, you will stretch out your hand,' and what follows; and it is said of Paul to Philemon, 'But now as Paul, an old man,' although he was a young man when Stephen was stoned for his testimony to Christ and Paul was watching the garments of those killing him.⁵² But we have made these comments because of the statement, 'After a long time the lord of those servants returned.' And notice in this passage that the servants do not go to the lord, that they might be judged and receive things worthy of their actions, but 'the lord comes' to them⁵³ since what is said shall have been accomplished, 'That the time is coming.'⁵⁴ And when he comes, 'he holds a reckoning with them' about everything they have done repaying with gains for good works and with loss for sins, so that when he holds 'a reckoning' and carefully examines all things he may use each one just as he ought. We, therefore, as those who by sinning have been condemned, but by doing good works have profited, ought so to guard our hearts with every precaution that when our Lord shall have come and held a reckoning with us, we may not be found condemned, even for an idle word.⁵⁵

67 'And when he who had received five talents comes, he brings five other talents saying, Lord, you gave me five talents; behold, I have gained five others in addition. His lord says to him, Well done good and faithful servant. Because you were faithful over a few things, I appoint you over many things. Enter the joy of your lord. And when he who had received two talents comes, he says, Lord, you gave me two talents; behold I have gained two others. His lord says to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; because you were faithful over a few things, I appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'⁵⁶

⁵¹ Mt 25:2, 6. ⁵² Jn 21:18; Philem 9; see Acts 7:58.

⁵³ Greek fragment:...whence also the servants [do] not [go] to the lord, but he comes, that when he has judged he might repay that which is worthy.

⁵⁴ See Mk 1:15.

⁵⁵ See Mt 12:36.

⁵⁶ Mt 25:20-3.

Thus, the first servant approached as one who had confidence because he had worked and gained; for confidence itself causes him to be bold and approach the lord first and courageously make a statement saying, 'Lord, you gave me five talents; behold I have gained five other talents beyond them'. The lord said to him what we all desire to hear when our Lord shall have made a reckoning with us too. He says: 'Well done, good and faithful servant', contrary to what he said to the third servant: 'Wicked and lazy servant'.⁵⁷ For who, when he is exhorted from that Scripture, does not wish to hear the word 'faithful' from his Lord, which I take to be like what was said of Abraham, that 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness'.⁵⁸ In the same way, there is no doubt a person's faith has been reckoned as righteousness if that person has heard the Lord say, 'Faithful servant'. Consequently, the faith of one who was 'faithful' in a small thing (and all things in this life are small things)⁵⁹ is reckoned as righteousness so that the whole mystery of the resurrection and the administration of the good things above might be entrusted to that person.

But let us also see where that good 'and faithful' servant who was 'faithful' in a small thing in this life enters. 'Enter', he says, 'into the joy of your lord'. For all things there are delightful and all things are joy, when the person who weeps here will laugh there, and the one who mourns in a praiseworthy manner will receive the consolation he deserves.⁶⁰ But understand with me the word 'coming' (whether in the case of him 'who received five talents' or that of him 'who' received 'two') as the approach to and departure from this world to that one, and observe that the lord did not make a different statement to the second from what he made to the previous one, saying: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over small things; I appoint you over great things'. I ask, since the same words are used for both, if perhaps the one who had less ability and made use of that total ability that he had as was necessary, will be esteemed no less with God than the person who possessed greater ability, so that the saying may be fulfilled in them: 'He who had much had nothing over, and he who had little did not lack'.⁶¹ Something like this is shown also in relation to the command about love for God or for the neighbour when it says: 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and with your whole strength'.⁶² For undoubtedly when someone shall have loved God with his 'whole heart' and with his 'whole soul' and with his 'whole strength' he will receive a reward for his love as great as the person who had a greater heart or who has a more eminent soul or who received greater strength.

⁵⁷ Mt 25:26.⁵⁸ Gen 15:6.⁵⁹ On Origen's understanding of 'small things' and 'great things' see *PEuch* 2.2 and 14.1, where he uses the agraphon, 'Ask for the great things and the small things will be added to you' (Resch [1967] 111-12, Agraphon 86).⁶⁰ See Lk 6:21; Mt 5:5.⁶¹ 2 Cor 8:15; see Ex 16:18.⁶² Mt 22:37.

For God looks for this alone: that a person use whatever he has from God totally for the glory of God.

68 'And when he who had received one talent comes, he says: Lord, I know that you are a hard man and you reap where you have not sowed, and you gather where you have not scattered; and being afraid, I went off and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have yours. But his lord answered and said to him: Wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and I gather where I have not scattered. You should, therefore, have entrusted my money to the money-changers so that when I came I might receive it with interest.'⁶³

That man 'who received one talent' appears to me to belong to those who indeed believe, but do not act openly in the faith; instead, they wish to hide and do all things so that they not be recognized as Christians. But perhaps their other habits were not sufficiently blameworthy, and what they received they indeed guard, but they do not also add to it. They neither do business with it nor act openly in it; therefore, the Word in them did not grow nor did it acquire others. In addition, those who are like this appear to me to have a fear of God and to understand him as someone austere, harsh, and implacable, for the very words of the one who answers and says, 'I knew that you are hard', indicate this and the consideration that he was one who knew him to reap 'where he had not' sown 'and' to gather 'where he had not' scattered. For this reason, 'his lord answers' him and rebukes him as a wicked and lazy servant. He did not, indeed, acknowledge himself to be a hard man as that servant thought, but he agreed with his other statements, saying to him: 'You knew that I reap where I did not sow, and I gather where I did not scatter'.

But how shall we understand the fact that our Lord truly reaps where he did not sow, and gathers where he did not scatter? This seems to me [to be applicable⁶⁴] in this passage, since the just person 'sows in the Spirit', from which he also 'reaps eternal life.'⁶⁵ For God reaps all things that are sown by another (that is by a just person) and are reaped for eternal life; for the just person is the possession of God who reaps where he himself did not sow, but the just person did. Consequently, we may also say this, that the just person 'scattered, he gave to the poor', and the Lord gathers into himself all things whatever the just person 'scattered and gave to the poor'.⁶⁶ And, by reaping what he did not sow and gathering where he did not scatter, he sums up in himself and is thought to have brought together in himself whatever has been sown or scattered to the poor by the faithful, saying to those who did good to their neighbours, 'Come,

⁶³ Mt 25:24-7. ⁶⁴ My addition.

⁶⁵ See Gal 6:8. Greek fragment: and what things the just person sows 'in the Spirit', from which 'he reaps eternal life', the possession belongs to God.

⁶⁶ 2 Cor 9:9.

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat' and the rest.⁶⁷

And because he wants to reap where he has not sown and gather where he has not scattered, when he shall not have found it, he will say to those who have not provided him the opportunity to sow and gather: 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire that my Father has prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me to eat', and the rest.⁶⁸ For he truly is 'hard' (as Matthew says), and 'austere' (as Luke said), but to these who abuse the mercy of God to their disregard, not to their conversion, as the apostle says: 'Behold the goodness and the severity of God; severity to those who have fallen, but goodness to you if you shall have remained in goodness.'⁶⁹ For God is good to that person who judges him to be good, believing that he will receive tenderness if he shall have turned to him. God is not good, however, but is 'hard' and 'austere' to that person who thinks him to be so good that he has no concern about the sins of sinners; for he is zealous against the sins of people who scorn him.

Nevertheless, seeing that Christ reaps what we have sown and gathers what we scattered, let us sow 'in the Spirit' and scatter 'to the poor' and not hide the talent of God in the earth.⁷⁰ For fear of this kind is not good, nor does such fear free us from that outer darkness⁷¹ once we shall have been condemned as wicked and lazy servants. We shall be condemned as wicked because we have not used that approved 'money' of the words of the Lord, with which we could have done business and discussed the teachings of Christianity and acquired the higher mysteries of the goodness of God; and lazy because we have not worked with the teachings of God for the salvation either of ourselves or of others,⁷² when we ought 'to have placed' our Lord's money, that is, his teachings, with pupils, the 'money-changers' who test and prove all things so that they may hold the doctrine that is good and true, but reject what lacks value and is false,⁷³ so that when the Lord comes, he may receive those teachings which we have brought together 'with interest' and with what has been added by those who received them from us. For each one is 'money', that is, every word that has the royal form of God and the image of his Word in itself, is

⁶⁷ Mt 25:34-6. Greek fragment: Again, the just person 'scattered, he gave to the poor', but the Lord gathers these things reckoning them to himself; 'for I was hungry and you gave me to eat', these things that were for the least, he gathers to himself.

⁶⁸ Mt 25:41-3.

⁶⁹ Rom 11:22.

⁷⁰ See Gal 6:8; 2 Cor 9:9. Greek fragment: Let us sow, therefore, and offer tithes and first fruits to him.

⁷¹ See Mt 25:30.

⁷² Greek fragment: wicked, therefore, because he did not even take advantage of the money that he had of those who were able to search out the divine mysteries with him. And lazy since he was afraid to work.

⁷³ Greek fragment: And the money-changers are the pupils who hold fast the good doctrines and keep away from the bad.

legitimate.⁷⁴ He will command the men, the 'money-changers' who are able to pay back his interest, to believe the Word. And he who hastens to save another with himself just as he has been saved pays back interest on the word, as Andrew did with Peter, Philip with Nathanael, and Matthew with the tax-collectors.⁷⁵ And this is what the apostle says: 'Entrust what you have heard from me through many witnesses to faithful people who will be capable of teaching others also'.⁷⁶ And the Lord says in a similar manner: 'No one lights a lamp and puts it under a vessel, but on a lamp-stand so that those who enter may see the light'.⁷⁷

69 'Take the talent from him, therefore, and give it to him who has ten talents'.⁷⁸

You see that the talent is taken from the wicked and lazy servant and given 'to him who has ten talents'. But in what way the talent that has been given to someone is taken away from him and given to another who is doing well that he might have this too beyond those that he has acquired is not easy to explain in an adequate manner—nevertheless, it is possible, since God, who makes proper sense in everything in the doctrines of the truth, is able in his divinity, by taking away the capacity from him who used it in a lazy way to give it to him who has multiplied it.

'For to everyone who has it will be given and he will have abundance, but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him'.⁷⁹

For example, the gift of faith which is from God 'is given' by the Spirit of faith 'to the one who has' even the faith which is from us, 'and he will have abundance'. And when anyone has exercised whatever he has from the natural creation he receives that very thing also from the gift of God so that he will have abundance and be stronger in that very thing that he has.⁸⁰ For we should take Solomon's words of every virtue and not of wisdom alone: 'And if someone who is perfect among the sons of men lacks your wisdom, he is counted as nothing'.⁸¹ And so such a person is counted 'as nothing' who is perfect in purity, or justice, or virtue, or piety, but lacks either the purity, or justice, or virtue, or piety that comes from the gift of God. Therefore, if we want a more perfect virtue to be given to us and to abound in us, let us give all diligence to acquiring that which is perfect among humans, and after we have acquired this, since we understand that this is counted 'as nothing' without the gift of

⁷⁴ Greek fragment: The coins of the Lord, therefore, are those who possess the royal form of God and the image of his Word.

⁷⁵ See Jn 1:40-2, 45; Mt 9:9-10.

⁷⁶ 2 Tim 2:2.

⁷⁷ Lk 8:16.

⁷⁸ Mt 25:28.

⁷⁹ Mt 25:29.

⁸⁰ Greek fragment: For example to the one who has the faith that is in our power, the gift of faith will be given, and in short, to the one who has anything present in himself from the natural creation that has been improved by his application and diligence, what is lacking will be supplied by God.

⁸¹ Wis 9:6.

God, let us humble ourselves 'under the mighty hand of God', and pray, 'lifting up pure hands without wrath and dispute';⁸² that the perfection of all the good things that are in us might be given from God and he may make us perfect and acceptable to God as sons of God.

But he 'who received one talent' and 'hid' it in the earth is not only rebuked as wicked 'and lazy', but, as if he is useless, he is sent 'into outer darkness'⁸³ where there may be no physical light or perception of God, but also, as if those who have committed such sins are unworthy of the contemplation of God, they are condemned to this place which is called 'outer darkness', until perhaps they may come to understand that they might return and be made worthy of departing from it. It may also be called the 'outer darkness' for another reason (which we do not know) since we read someone who preceded us who was explaining the darkness of the abyss⁸⁴ and said that the abyss is outside the world, beyond even darkness. Let us consider, therefore, if his explanation can be correct, so that we should understand that 'outer darkness' in this way, so that someone, as if unworthy of this entire world, should be cast forth into that abyss (which he explained) where there is darkness, since no one illuminates it because it is outside the whole world.⁸⁵

70 'But when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory, and all the nations will be gathered before him', and the rest.⁸⁶

This discourse appears to be clear and to need no examination. It exhorts people to giving and generosity and turning away from all inhumanity and stinginess. Let us see, therefore, what needs to be investigated in it for the sake of those who think there is nothing more in it than an exhortation about kindness. Certainly, the whole church believes there will be a second and glorious coming of Christ when the 'Son of God' 'who was taken up in glory', will also return here in the same way with 'glory' in his splendour and beauty. Then his body will be what it was when he was transfigured on the mountain before the three disciples who ascended with him, so that now he may appear to all the nations gathered 'before him',⁸⁷ and not to three or a few others. And 'he will sit on the throne of his glory' and at that time 'he will separate' the wicked from the good—but whether all from all who existed in all generations, or only those nations are to be understood which shall have been left behind at the consummation, or only those who have believed in God through Christ, and of these, whether all or not all, is not sufficiently clear. This is what has been said, although some will think it different from what they have believed. So far

⁸² See 1 Pet 5:6; 1 Tim 2:8.

⁸³ See Mt 25:18, 26, 30.

⁸⁴ See Gn 1:2.

⁸⁵ Greek fragment: But if the darkness is upon the abyss (see Gen 1:2), and this is outside the world, as some say, according to this those who are unworthy of the whole world are cast out into that abyss, since no one illuminates the things outside the structure of the entire world.

⁸⁶ Mt 25:31–4.

⁸⁷ See 1 Tim 3:16; Is 53:2; Mt 17:2.

as the simple meaning of the text is concerned, then, neither are those who stood 'at the right hand' praised and invited into the 'kingdom that has been prepared' for any other reason than their kindness alone, nor are those who are 'on the left hand' embarrassed and assigned to the fire for any other reason than their unkindness. What then? If those who were kind were neglectful of the other virtues, do such promises as these follow? Or will those who were not kind but fulfilled the other virtues be completely cursed? And are they to be condemned to the fire, and this with the devil himself?⁸⁸ You see, therefore, that the discourse contains an essential wisdom.

Likewise, it must be examined whether the coming of the Saviour 'in glory' will be in a place, or we ought to consider another explanation. For what will that place be that might receive in one glance 'all' the angels coming with Christ and 'all the nations' gathered there? And what is to be said about the throne 'of his glory'? Do you think it will be some material seat, or does this too need a more precise interpretation? The person, therefore, who wishes to understand all things rationally will discover much wisdom even in these words. It is dangerous indeed to explain things of this kind, but lest, by passing them over in silence because of the difficulty of understanding more fully we abandon those who are moved to wavering by these matters, let us explain (as far as that is possible) a few of the many things. I think, then, that the return of Christ will occur when there is such a great a manifestation of Christ and of his divinity that no person, just or sinner, will be ignorant of Christ 'according to what he is'.⁸⁹ Sinners will recognize their own faults at his appearance, and the just will see clearly where the seeds of their justice have led them. This is what 'all the nations will be gathered before him' means. For if now, when 'all' do not know Christ 'according to what he is', nor do the very people who appear to know him publicly know him, but people enter into his presence only in faith because they receive knowledge of him through faith, as it is written: 'Enter into his presence with exultation'⁹⁰—how much more correctly is it said that 'all nations' are to be gathered and stand 'before him' when all will see him openly, the good and the bad, the faithful and the unfaithful, before the eyes of their mind, perceived no longer by faith or someone's diligent investigation, but made known by the manifestation of his divinity itself?

'When' the Son of God 'shall come in his glory' he will not appear in one place and not in another, but as he himself compared his coming with lightening that flashes, when he says, 'If they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert, do not go out; behold he is in the house, do not believe it; for just as the lightning flashes from the east and appears in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man.'⁹¹ Therefore, 'just as' lightening 'flashing from the east', consequently fills all things and 'appears in the west', so 'when' Christ 'shall come in his glory', consequently he will be everywhere, and he will be in the sight of

⁸⁸ See Rev 20:10.⁸⁹ See 1 Jn 3:2.⁹⁰ Ps 99:2.⁹¹ Mt 24:26-7.

all everywhere, and all everywhere will be in his sight, and so they will stand before the throne of his glory, that is before his kingdom and the authority of his dominion. But surely either some more perfect saints (of whom it is written: 'Because there sat the thrones for judgement'⁹²) or some angelic powers (of whom it is said: 'whether thrones or dominions'⁹³) are said to be his 'throne'. Therefore, the king of the ages, God the Word, who also was made in the form of a 'man,'⁹⁴ 'will sit on a throne' of this kind 'of his glory, and all the nations will be gathered to him,' no longer scattered from him in many false doctrines, and so they will be 'before him,' so that we may not hear in a local sense, 'all nations' come to be 'before him,' just as we do not hear in a local sense that the just will say to him what they will say. Therefore, as long as the unjust are led astray, knowing neither themselves nor Christ but being covered in darkness and held in errors, and as long as the just see 'darkly in a mirror' and know themselves 'in part,'⁹⁵ not as they truly are—so long have the good not been separated from the bad. But the Saviour 'will separate' the good from the bad when all come to their own understanding because of the manifestation of the Son of God. And those are said to be 'sheep,' who are saved because of their meekness, which they learned from him who says: 'Learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart'⁹⁶ and because of the fact that they were prepared to come 'to the point of slaughter' in imitation of Christ, who 'was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb without voice before its shearer,'⁹⁷ and not simply 'without voice,' but 'before its shearer without voice,' that is, before the one who is removing and plundering what is its own. But the wicked, who wickedly climb rough hard rocks and advance by means of their precipices, are called 'goats'. Understand with me also the saints 'at the right hand,' who have performed works on the right hand and have turned more fully to justice, which is always 'at the right hand' of God. Therefore, they stand 'at the right hand' in accordance with the worthiness of their actions on the right hand, and receive as a reward of their actions a place at the right hand of the king, where there is rest and glory. But those who, by the perversity of their life, separated themselves from the right hand because of their evil and left-handed works, have fallen to the left hand, that is they have been condemned to the sorrow of torments, on account of which they stand 'at the left hand'. 'Then the king will say to those who are on his right hand,' inviting them to himself: 'Come' so that, whatever was lacking in them, when they shall have been more completely united with Christ, they may follow, hearing: 'Come' and they do it. His words in Luke are: 'Take the talent away from him and give it to him who has ten. For to everyone who has it will be added, but even what he appears to have will be taken from him who does not have.'⁹⁸ And he calls them blessed of

⁹² Ps 121:5.⁹³ Col 1:16.⁹⁴ See Phil 2:7.⁹⁵ 1 Cor 13:12.⁹⁶ Mt 11:29. Greek fragment: And he calls the saints sheep because of their gentleness, and the impious goats because they are good at leaping.⁹⁷ See Heb 12:4; Acts 8:32 (Is 53:7).⁹⁸ Lk 19:24-6.

the Father, with the addition, 'blessed of my Father', that the excellence of the blessing of those who have been blessed by the Lord 'who made heaven and earth' might be manifest.⁹⁹ Some are 'blessed' indeed, but not of the 'Father', perhaps because some who are blessed are inferior.

71 'Receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'¹⁰⁰

[What the Latin has as 'from the foundation of the world' is in Greek, 'from the casting down of the world'. The Greek word relates what is not proper to express in Latin.¹⁰¹] The person who is able should investigate why the Scriptures frequently use the expression 'the casting down of the world', as here when it says 'from the casting down of the world', aware that not everything that was created is termed a 'casting down', nor is it written anywhere, 'from the casting down' of thrones, or dominions, or principalities.¹⁰² By collecting the term 'casting down' from all passages, assuming it is used in some other passage, and comparing those words with these which are said of the 'casting down of the world', and ascending by means of the Word to other things that have been created but not cast down because no casting down of them will occur, you will see the reason for the renowned casting down, which term is received only of the world.¹⁰³ But it is not an act of piety to entrust subjects of this sort to written words that can come into the hands of men of bad morals, liars, and lovers of novelty, with the result that pearls insufficiently perfected are put before swine, or holy things given to dogs.¹⁰⁴

72 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat', and the rest.¹⁰⁵

It seems to me that this statement does not reward the display of a single act of righteousness as many think. It is absurd to understand no other virtue in the person who is thus rewarded than the imparting of an act of kindness alone. I do not say this so that we might neglect to strive after kindness, since it especially is to be observed by all the faithful, but so that we might strive equally for all virtues, or nearly equally, in order that we, therefore, on account of all of them, may receive every blessing 'in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus'.¹⁰⁶ First, however, we must know that just as (so far as the text is concerned) it is not sufficient to give something to eat to the hungry to attain the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom unless we have also done the other things

⁹⁹ Acts 4:24. ¹⁰⁰ Mt 25:34.

¹⁰¹ Klostermann makes the obvious identification of this sentence with the Latin translator. The translator was nervous about the Greek word 'casting down' (*katabolē*) because it was a part of the doctrine of the creation of the physical world attributed to Origen by his detractors that accused him of teaching that there was a fall of spiritual beings that preceded the creation of the physical world and which was the cause for its creation.

¹⁰² See Col 1:16.

¹⁰³ This is one of Origen's most commonly used exegetical moves. He usually calls it 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual', based on 1 Cor 2:13. See Heine (1997) 136-8.

¹⁰⁴ See Mt 7:6. ¹⁰⁵ Mt 25:35-41. ¹⁰⁶ Eph 1:3.

which follow, in the same way it is not possible to fulfil all those things according to the text, as many think, without partially acting contrary to the command of God. For one must also be rich that he might give food, drink, and clothing to Christ who, in his saints, is hungry, thirsty, and cold, so that, by this means, he may take him in as a stranger, and visit him sick, and go to him in prison.¹⁰⁷ But truly, whether we understand the good deeds in a simple, physical manner or in a spiritual manner, it is certain that in either way the person who performs a good deed and nourishes souls with spiritual foods, or has performed a good deed of whatever kind for the sake of God, gives food and drink to Christ who is hungry and thirsty. Whether what we do for the saints, who are rich in merits and poor in things or in anything you please, those who are poor in merits even if they are rich in things, or in whatever conditions someone has done what Christ commanded—gives food and drink to Christ, who eats and drinks the righteousness and truth of the faithful.

Likewise, we cover Christ who is cold with a garment when we take the texture of wisdom from God so that we may teach others with the doctrine, and clothe them in 'the viscera of mercy, purity, gentleness, humility' and the other virtues, all of which are the spiritual garments of those who listen to the teaching of those who teach them in agreement with him who says, 'Clothe yourselves with the viscera of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness,' and the rest,¹⁰⁸ but even more so with Christ himself, who is all these things for the faithful according to him who said, 'Put on the Lord Jesus.'¹⁰⁹ When, therefore, we shall have clothed 'one of the least' who believes in Christ with garments of this kind, we are seen to have clothed the Lord himself, so that (so far as we are concerned) the Word of God may not be unclothed in the world. But we ought also to receive the stranger who has been designated a son of God, and the members of his body who are strangers in the world, pure of all bodily impulses, just as he also says of himself and of his disciples, 'And they are not of this world, just as I am not of this world.'¹¹⁰ And Christ seeks where he may enter a soul with his own. Whenever, therefore, we prepare our heart with the diverse virtues as a shelter for him or for those who are his, we receive him, who is a stranger, into the house of our breast, preparing 'a large room, cleaned and furnished' for the reception of Christ, who is a stranger in the world, and of his other disciples. For we appear to receive in ourselves the persons whose word we receive, and we receive Christ through them, for they bear his word.

Likewise, in people who are weak, whether in faith or in some good work, or who are suffering offence,¹¹¹ Christ is weak and suffers offence, just as he says to Peter who understands the things of the flesh, 'You are a stumbling-block to me,'¹¹² that is, You are a weakness to me. But also, all his beloved disciples are weak with such people and suffer offence saying, 'Who is weak and

¹⁰⁷ See Mt 25:35-40.¹⁰⁸ Col 3:12.¹⁰⁹ Rom 13:14.¹¹⁰ Jn 17:14.¹¹¹ See Rom 14:1; 2 Cor 11:29.¹¹² Mt 16:23.

we are not weak? Who suffers offence and we are not distressed'?¹¹³ And if his disciples are weak together with the weak, how much more this is true of the Saviour, their creator, for a more serious weakness constrains the person who has a greater compassion for weak people. When, therefore, we have visited one weak 'brother', either with teaching, or rebuking, or consolation, or prayers, or the fear of judgement or have done some other good works in him to improve him in Christ we have visited Christ himself, and comforted the 'weak', and we have refreshed the other disciples of Christ who are weak with those who suffer such things, just as Paul says to Philemon: 'For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the viscera of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.'¹¹⁴ And do not think it is blasphemy to refer to Christ as weak. He 'was crucified out of weakness' on account of his compassion, and 'he himself', and all his friends, 'bears our weaknesses'.¹¹⁵ Besides, everything that is here is the prison of Christ and of those who are his. For this reason, let us go to those who are held in the house of these chains as if 'in a prison', and are spending their time in this world bound by the necessity of nature as if in a prison. When, therefore, we have turned aside to such people and performed every good work for them, we have visited them 'in prison', and Christ in them.

See if these understandings, in general, do not encourage us to simple acts of kindness and all praiseworthy deeds, so that, in a worthy manner, one might be able to pursue the blessing for the worthy that says: 'Come, blessed of my Father'.¹¹⁶ And it is not that the 'just' have forgotten what they did that 'they then will answer and say to him: Lord, When did we see you hungry?' and the rest, but out of humility they proclaim themselves unworthy of the praise of their benefactors. And he, wishing to show them his compassion for them, also announces that he is in those who were his brothers, by saying: 'Truly I say to you, because you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me'.¹¹⁷ Consider now what he says to the just: 'Come, blessed of my Father', and to the unjust: 'Depart from me', since they had, at least, been faithful. We understand that what is written was fulfilled in them: 'To everyone who has will be given and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have even what he seems to have will be taken from him'.¹¹⁸ For those who keep the command of God have drawn near to the Word and they are called that they may be made even nearer when they hear, 'Come, blessed of my Father'; but those who have not obeyed his commands are far from him (even if they appear to stand by him). For this reason, it is taken from them and, because they thought of themselves as standing beside him, they hear: 'Depart from me', so that those who now actually are seen to be before him, afterwards are not seen. For this reason, we too ought to be on guard so that we too not hear,

¹¹³ 2 Cor 11:29.¹¹⁴ Philemon 7.¹¹⁵ 2 Cor 13:4; Is 53:4.¹¹⁶ Mt 25:34.¹¹⁷ Ibid.¹¹⁸ Mt 25:29.

as if removing ourselves from the Lord, 'Depart from me.' Let us do all things that it may be said to us: 'Come, blessed of my Father.' And we must consider that among the saints not only is it said, 'Blessed,' but with an addition that does not contain just any kind of honour, that is, 'blessed' not by any other than by 'God the Father.' But on the contrary, it is not said, 'cursed' of my Father, to those pronounced 'cursed,' for the Father administers blessings, but each one who has acted in a way deserving a curse is the author of his own curse.¹¹⁹

And those who depart from Jesus fall 'into eternal fire,' which is of a different kind from this fire that we use. For no fire among humans is eternal, but is very temporary because it goes out quickly. But that fire of which Isaiah speaks at the end of his prophecy is eternal: 'Their worm will not die and their fire will not be extinguished.'¹²⁰ Perhaps its substance is such that it burns up invisible things, being invisible itself in the words of the apostle, 'The things that are seen are temporary; but the things that are not seen are eternal.'¹²¹ If, therefore, 'the things that are seen are temporary but the things that are not seen are eternal,' that fire must be temporary if it is visible; but if the fire with which those who withdraw from the Saviour are punished is eternal, it is also invisible. Such is the fire that Job also mentions: 'A fire that is not kindled will consume him.'¹²² And do not be astonished when you hear that there is an invisible and punishing 'fire,' since you see a fever in the bodies of people, especially those who are excessively bothered by it, that is consuming and causes no inconsiderable torment. And take note that he says the kingdom has been prepared 'from the foundation of the world' for no others than the just, and therefore Christ, their king, restores it to them. And he shows that 'eternal fire' has been 'prepared' not for those to whom it is said, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed,' as the kingdom was prepared for the just, but 'for the devil and his angels' because (so far as they themselves are concerned) people were not created for destruction but for life and joy,¹²³ but by sinning they unite themselves with the devil. And just as those who are saved are made equal to the holy angels and become 'sons of the resurrection' and 'sons of God' and angels,¹²⁴ so those who perish are made equal to the angels of the devil and become his angels.

73 'I was hungry and you did not give me to eat,' and the rest.¹²⁵

It is written to the faithful: 'You are the body of Christ, and members in part.'¹²⁶ Therefore, just as the soul inhabiting the body hungers for each bodily food because it is joined to its body, although it does not hunger insofar as its own spiritual substance is concerned, so also the Saviour suffers what his body, the church,¹²⁷ suffers, although he is impassable insofar as his own divinity is concerned. For when the saints are in need of food, he also hungers; and when

¹¹⁹ Greek fragment: And he calls them cursed, not by the Father; for their own works make them cursed.

¹²⁰ Is 66:24.

¹²¹ 2 Cor 4:18.

¹²² Job 20:26.

¹²³ Wis 1:13, 14.

¹²⁴ See Lk 20:36.

¹²⁵ Mt 25:42-6.

¹²⁶ 1 Cor 12:27.

¹²⁷ See Eph 1:22, 23.

his other members need medicine, he too has need, as if he were 'sick' himself; in the same way, when others need acceptance, he too, like a 'stranger' seeks among them 'where he may lay his head',¹²⁸ just as he is also cold among the unclothed, and is clothed with clothing.¹²⁹ And if Paul says out of love, 'Who is sick, and I am not sick?' and this refers especially to praise of the apostle who shows how great his love for the faithful is, why cannot the Son of the love of God, the Saviour say, more appropriately than Paul and every person adorned with love, 'Who is sick and I am not sick? Who is made to stumble and I do not burn?' For this reason, he says, 'I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.' For when a member of Christ has been put in prison, he who says of the just, 'I am with him in distress', that is, I share in his distress, is not free of the prison.¹³⁰ For just as he who is mine is in distress with me, so too am I in distress with him. And I say this, not unmindful of that more common tradition.

Notice this too, that he lingers at each word when speaking to the just and praising them, and enumerates their virtuous deeds by their individual species. But when he speaks to the unjust he abbreviates, shortening and summarizing their evil deeds briefly. For example, to the just he says of sickness, 'I was sick and you visited me', and he speaks of prison separately: 'I was in prison and you came to me';¹³¹ but to the unjust, when he could have said, in a similar manner, I was sick and you did not visit me; I was in prison and you did not come to me, he shortens the narrative and unites the two, saying, 'I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit me', because it was the nature of the merciful judge to commend the good deeds of people abundantly and to magnify them, but to take notice of their evil deeds in passing and briefly. But the just also linger at each word, saying, 'When did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you a drink? Or naked and clothe you, or a stranger and receive you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison?'¹³² Since it is characteristic of the just, when their good deeds have been carefully presented before them, to refute them one by one for the sake of humility, as if, when the Lord says, You did this, and this, and this, for me, they protest and say, We did not do this, or this, or this, for you. The unjust do not thus name the acts individually, but say hastily, 'When did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you?' They refer to them all with the phrase, 'ministered to you', and as if abbreviating and passing over their offences so that they not appear more serious, enumerated carefully and one by one, because it is characteristic of evil people to want to show (as an excuse) either that their faults are nothing, or that they are insignificant and few.

But the response of Christ, made as much to the just as to the unjust, indicates this same understanding. For wishing to show the good deeds of the just to be great, but the faults of the sinners not great, he says to the just, 'Because

¹²⁸ Mt 8:20.¹³¹ Mt 25:36.¹²⁹ See Mt 25:36.¹³² Mt 25:37-9.¹³⁰ Ps 90:15.

you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me', but to the unjust he says, 'Because you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me', not adding 'my brothers', as when he was speaking to the just.¹³³ For all who believe in Christ are brothers of Christ by an improper use of the phrase, but they are his brothers in truth who are perfect and are imitators of him, just as the person who said: 'Be imitators of me, as I too am of Christ', who can say: 'Our Father, you who art in heaven.'¹³⁴ And a good work done for the more holy pleases God more than one done for the less holy, and it is a lesser fault to neglect the less holy than the more holy. But he mentions the least, either as considered least in the world, or because they were least in their own opinions—for wishing to become great with God they were making themselves least, as the beloved disciples of him who said, 'Learn from me, because I am gentle and lowly in heart.'¹³⁵ And pay attention to this: although he had said earlier, 'Come, blessed', then he said, 'Depart, cursed' (because it is characteristic of the good God to remember the good deeds of the good before the wicked deeds of the evil). Afterwards, at the exit of both, he mentions first the punishment of the wicked, then the life of the good, saying: 'And those will depart to eternal punishment, but these to eternal life', so that we may first avoid the wicked deeds that are accompanied by terror, then strive for the virtuous deeds that belong to honour.

¹³³ Mt 25:40.¹³⁴ 1 Cor 11:1; Mt 6:9.¹³⁵ Mt 11:29.

Series 74–114 (Matthew 26)

74 'And it happened after Jesus finished all these words, he said to his disciples.'¹

Wishing to show that God appoints all things by weight, number, and measure,² he says in another place to his mother, 'My hour has not yet come', and likewise, 'Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this reason, I have come to this hour', and again, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that also your Son may glorify you'—so he has also appointed the hour of the passion of his Son.³ Therefore, although he often experienced plots from the Jews, when the devil departs from him 'until the time'⁴ he could suffer nothing until he had finished 'all' his 'words' that he intended to speak to his disciples. Therefore, 'after he finished all these words,' then 'he said to his disciples.' And notice that it did not say simply 'after he finished all words,' but it adds 'all these,' that is the words that he had already spoken, not those which he was still to speak. For he still had other words to speak before he was handed over, both 'in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper' about the woman who approaches him,⁵ and likewise to make the Passover with his disciples and to convict the hiding betrayer, and to give thanks, and to offer them the bread and the cup.⁶ And he had also to tell his disciples in advance that they would be made to stumble, and Peter that he was to deny him three times before the crow of the cock.⁷ And although the hour was approaching, he still had to pray, not once, or twice, but three times, until the hour fully arrived.⁸

75 'You know that after two days the Passover will take place, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.'⁹

If, therefore, even the hour had been determined, in relation to which we said that he would not be handed over before completing all his teaching, how had the day not been determined even more so, that 'Christ our Passover' should be sacrificed, bringing the Passover of the Jews to nothing and delivering to his disciples [the Passover] related to the new covenant?¹⁰ Even the

¹ Mt 26:1.

² See Wis 11:20.

³ Jn 2:4; 12:27; 17:1.

⁴ Lk 4:13.

⁵ Mt 26:6, 7.

⁶ See Mt 26:17, 21–5, 26–8.

⁷ See Mt 26:31, 34.

⁸ See Mt 26:36–44.

⁹ Mt 26:2.

¹⁰ See 1 Cor 5:7. The bracketed words are my additions.

month had to be determined to be that of the Passover, and I think the year too, of which the prophet said, 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of salvation.'¹¹ Therefore, he tells his disciples in advance to prepare them so that, suddenly seeing the teacher handed over to the cross before they hear what was to take place, they not be struck with terror because of the suffering befalling the Lord. Therefore, he said to them: 'You know that after two days the Passover will take place, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified'. But he did not intend by this, as some think, that 'after two days' the day of the Passover will arrive, but that 'after two days' the new 'Passover will take place'. For he did not say, 'After two days the Passover will be or will come', so that he not indicate that Passover which was coming that normally occurred according to the Law, but he said, 'the Passover will take place', that is, such as had never occurred, so that by this new Passover that ancient one was brought to nothing. For he adds the following: 'And the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified'. And after two days the Passover which he had prophesied occurred, when he was handed over in the night and said to Judas who kissed him, 'Friend, why have you come?'¹² And if the 'Passover occurred' after two days, that is on the fourteenth of the month, it is clear that when he said those things related to the Jews it was the eleventh of the month, when he also related the parables mentioned above.

But it is not recorded here by whom he was handed over. You, however, will gather from the Scriptures that even the Father handed him over, as it is written: 'Who did not spare his only Son, but handed him over for us all'.¹³ According to other Scriptures, however, 'Judas' handed him over. But 'Satan' who 'entered Judas' also handed him over, and also 'the chief priests and elders' 'handed' him 'over'.¹⁴ He uses the impersonal 'he will be betrayed' here, not saying by whom because the word can apply to all who handed him over. Not all, however, handed him over with the same intention. God, who 'did not spare his only Son but handed him over for us all',¹⁵ handed him over because of his compassion for humanity. Others, however, handed him over with a hostile intent related to their own wickedness: Judas because of greed; the priests because of envy; the devil because of fear, lest by his teaching he snatch humanity from his hand, unaware that the human race was to be torn away to a greater extent by his death than it had been by his teaching and miracles. For he was handed over 'to be crucified' that, 'stripping the principalities and powers,' he might 'confidently' conquer them on the wood.

76 'Then the chief priests and scribes and elders of the people were gathered in the palace of the high priest who was called Caiaphas, and took counsel that they might take Jesus deceitfully and kill him; but they said, Not on the day of the feast, lest there be a riot among the people'.¹⁶

¹¹ Is 61:2.¹² Mt 26:50.¹³ Rom 8:32.¹⁴ See Mt 26:47, 48; Lk 22:3; Mt 27:1, 2.¹⁵ See Col 2:15.¹⁶ Mt 26:3-5.

The words of the prophet, 'And the princes came together as one against the Lord and against his Christ,'¹⁷ are seen to have been fulfilled when 'the chief priests and elders of the people were gathered' in the house 'of the chief priest' 'against the Lord and against his Christ'—but not priests of the true 'people,' and 'elders' not of other people but of that people which appeared truly to be the people of God but were the people of Gomorrah, because they said: 'Crucify, crucify him,' and: 'Remove such a one from the earth.'¹⁸ And Isaiah's words, 'Hear the word of the Lord, princes of Sodom; listen to the law of God, you people of Gomorrah,'¹⁹ apply to those Jews who lived in the time of Christ who were plotting against him. And Ezekiel's words to Jerusalem, 'Sodom has been justified rather than you,'²⁰ suit being said to the Jerusalem over which the Lord wept,²¹ more than at the time of the prophet. For the 'princes of the people' sinned worse than the people of Sodom because they did not understand the highest priest of God²² but plotted against him, and the 'elders of the people' took counsel against him not recognizing 'the firstborn of all creation'²³ and elder to all created things.²⁴ And because of that 'palace' (I think) in which 'they took counsel that they might lay hold of Jesus by deceit,' Jerusalem was desolated. For it was necessary that the city that had acted against the founder of the entire world not exist thereafter. This city had previously indeed killed 'the prophets,'²⁵ but afterwards, it killed the Lord of the prophets.

'That they might lay hold of him by deceit.' Therefore, the prophet said appropriately of them, 'May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips.'²⁶ And they wished to lay hold of him 'by deceit' and kill him, 'so that there not be a riot among' that 'people' who had seen Jesus performing many signs and wonders. And therefore, many from this group were for him, who perhaps had said, 'A great prophet has arisen in Israel';²⁷ but others were against him and had said, 'This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub the prince of demons.'²⁸ There had, therefore, to be a riot when the Lord had been seized because of the diverse partisanships of the people who loved Christ and those who hated him, of those who believed and of those who did not believe. For their counsel stood firm, as it were, (although they themselves who took counsel would not stand), that he be killed 'not on the day of the feast' but on another day, so that 'Christ, our Passover,' of course, might be sacrificed,²⁹ so that, leaving the unleavened bread of the Jews behind, we might celebrate the feast with spiritual and true unleavened bread.³⁰ But consider if you can say that every word that declares the doctrine of God in whatever way is a chief priest of God. But since there are many words of false doctrines, 'priests' of God, as it were, however not of God but of the 'people' who have been deceived by them, take counsel against the one true Word of God. And the Word of God

¹⁷ Ps 2:2. ¹⁸ Lk 23:21, 18. ¹⁹ Is 1:10.

²⁰ See Ez 16:51, 52, and Origen's similar citation in *HomJer* 8.7.

²¹ See Lk 19:41.

²² See Heb 4:14.

²³ Col 1:15.

²⁴ See Prov 8:22-31.

²⁵ See Mt 23:31.

²⁶ Ps 11:3.

²⁷ Lk 7:16.

²⁸ Mt 12:24.

²⁹ 1 Cor 5:7.

³⁰ See 1 Cor 5:8.

offers himself to the plotters; he will, nevertheless, rise again, neither changed nor corrupted by them, and ascend into heaven that he may receive those who take up their cross and follow him.³¹

77 'And when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a woman having an alabaster box of expensive ointment approached him and poured it on his head as he was reclining. But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant', etc.³²

Many, indeed, think the four evangelists have told of one and the same woman,³³ because they have written something in common about a woman, and all alike have mentioned an 'alabaster box of ointment'. John, however, referred to a 'pound of ointment' before the alabaster box.³⁴ But also, the words 'This could have been sold and given to the poor' appear in Matthew, Mark, and John. They also note that Christ pronounced this outpouring as anointing for his burial, and the same three have written that it happened 'in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper'. John, however, says Bethany where 'they made a dinner for him and Martha was serving and Lazarus was one of those reclining, and Mary took a pound of very expensive genuine spikenard ointment' etc., from which it appears that these made the dinner for him.³⁵ Luke, however, although he did not mention Simon the leper, said it was a Pharisee, nevertheless, who invited Jesus 'to eat with him, as the Lord himself testifies concerning his name when he says to him there: 'Simon, Simon, I have something to say to you'.³⁶ Therefore, there is a lot of similarity and a certain resemblance that appears concerning the woman in the four evangelists.

Nevertheless, I say to those who think there was one woman of whom all the evangelists wrote: Do you think that this 'woman' who 'poured' expensive ointment 'on the head' of Jesus, as Matthew and Mark say,³⁷ herself also 'anointed his feet with myrrh', as Luke and John say?³⁸ For it is not possible that the evangelists, who were to be ministers for the salvation of the churches, have contradicted themselves speaking about the same woman, since they had been 'perfected in the same understanding, and in the same Spirit, and in the same judgement'.³⁹ But if anyone should think it was she who anointed the Lord's feet with ointment in Luke and John,⁴⁰ let him tell us if it was Mary herself here who in Luke is recorded to have been 'a sinner in the city',⁴¹ who 'learning that he reclined in the house of a Pharisee, brought an alabaster box of ointment and standing behind, at his feet weeping, was washing his feet with tears'.⁴² For it is not credible that the Mary, whom 'Jesus loved', the sister of Martha, 'who had chosen the better part',⁴³ should be said to have been 'a

³¹ See Mt 16:24.

³² Mt 26:6-13.

³³ Greek fragment: She seems to some to be one and the same woman in all the evangelists.

³⁴ John 12:3.

³⁵ See Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8.

³⁶ See Lk 7:36, 40.

³⁷ See Mk 14:3.

³⁸ See Lk 7:38; Jn 12:3.

³⁹ 1 Cor 1:10.

⁴⁰ See Lk 7:38; Jn 12:3.

⁴¹ Lk 7:37.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Jn 11:5; see Lk 10:42.

sinner in the city'. And do you think that 'the woman' who, according to Matthew and Mark, 'poured' expensive ointment 'on the head' of Jesus, is accidentally not recorded to have been a sinner but she, who is said to have been a 'sinner' according to Luke, had not dared to come to Christ's head, but 'washed his feet with tears' as if scarcely even worthy of his very feet, and by her sorrow produces 'repentance steadfast for salvation'?⁴⁴ And she who is mentioned in Luke wails and weeps a lot, as she washes Jesus' 'feet with tears', but the Mary who is mentioned in John is introduced neither as a sinner nor as weeping. Perhaps, then, someone will say that there were four women about whom the evangelists wrote. I however, rather favour the view that there were three. There was one of whom Matthew and Mark together wrote, differing in no way in their narration in that section, and there was another of whom Luke wrote, and another of whom John wrote,⁴⁵ since she differs from the other women not only in what is written about the ointment, but also because 'Jesus loved' Mary and Martha⁴⁶—although she too is related to have been in Bethany just as the woman of whom Matthew and Mark speak. There is a third difference because Matthew and Mark relate that this deed occurred 'in the house of Simon the leper',⁴⁷ but John says that 'Jesus came to Bethany six days before Passover, where Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised, was and they made a dinner for him', not Simon, but Mary and Martha, and perhaps Lazarus, 'and Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of those reclining'.⁴⁸ And in addition, according to John 'six days before the Passover he came into Bethany', when also Mary and Martha 'made a dinner for him';⁴⁹ but here, when 'he was' also 'reclining in the house of Simon the leper a woman came to him' when 'the Passover' was to be 'two days later',⁵⁰ just as was said above.

It remains that someone might say: If Matthew and Mark wrote of one woman and John of another and Luke of a third, how have the disciples, once rebuked by Christ about the person of one woman (as very displeased by the woman's action) not corrected themselves so that they do not become indignant about another woman who acts in a similar way? Furthermore, let him know that in Matthew and Mark the disciples are indignant for a good reason, but in John, only Judas with a disposition for stealing, and in Luke no one grumbles.⁵¹ On the basis of these observations, therefore, and others that you

⁴⁴ See 2 Cor 7:10.

⁴⁵ Greek fragment: Perhaps someone may say that there were four women of whom the evangelists wrote. But I agree rather with the view that there were three. There was one of whom Matthew and Mark, who are in agreement in many other passages of the gospel scripture, wrote, and another of whom Luke wrote, and there was someone different from those previously mentioned of whom John wrote.

⁴⁶ Jn 11:5.

⁴⁷ See Mk 14:3.

⁴⁸ Jn 12:1, 2. Greek fragment: For although the things in regard to the woman are recorded to have happened in Bethany, Matthew and Mark relate that these things occurred in the house of Simon the leper, but John says that 'six days before the Passover Jesus entered Bethany where Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, was' and what follows.

⁴⁹ Jn 12:1, 2.

⁵⁰ See Mt 26:2.

⁵¹ See Mk 14:5; Jn 12:4-6; Lk 7:38.

yourself can take note of, it is certain that either the evangelists contradict one another and consequently some of them are lying, or (if it is impious to believe this) one must say that all the evangelists have not written about the same woman, but about three or four. And someone with a little more daring will say: Perhaps, as far as history is concerned, there was one woman who did something like this, and posit also another (if you wish), and a third, but primarily the purpose of the evangelists had the mysteries in view, and they had no great concern to tell the story in relation to the truth of history, but they set forth the mysteries of those things that were born from history. For this reason, they also wove in certain words in agreement and harmony with the understandings of the mysteries.⁵²

But we examined the subject of the women, or of the one woman (as many think), that are set forth in the four evangelists more carefully when we were explaining the Gospel according to John.⁵³ They seemed to us to be contrary and different, even though they were similar and connected. But now let us treat them briefly. Luke, therefore, reasonably, even though he speaks of the woman as a sinner, introduced her weeping abundantly, so that she was even washing Jesus' feet, and she is not pouring out ointment, indeed, but is only anointing, and not his head but his feet. But that woman who is not accused of being a sinner does not anoint, but 'pours out,' and not on his feet, but 'on' his 'head.'⁵⁴ And if someone should examine also the things that have been written about Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who also 'anointed' the Lord's 'feet,' let him take note that it is written there that the whole 'house was filled with the smell of the ointment.'⁵⁵ This is not written about her who was said to be a 'sinner,'⁵⁶ nor was any such thing saying that the whole 'house was filled with the smell of the ointment' written about the woman of whom Matthew and Mark wrote, who was not said to have been a 'sinner'.

Perhaps, therefore, diverse levels of faithfulness are shown by means of the differences between those women. Some of them pour expensive ointment on Jesus' head; others do not anoint his head, but his feet; others do not pour out liberally, but use only so much ointment; but others use so much ointment that the whole house is filled with the aroma of his divinity. And there are others who are not of such kind, nevertheless, they too are acceptable to Christ because they also anoint his feet with ointment, which the Pharisee did not anoint 'with oil.' And it was necessary that these things be done 'in Bethany,' which means 'house of obedience,' and by this woman who 'poured' ointment 'on the head' of the Lord, and who was not accused of being 'a sinner in the city,' and by Mary, who approached Jesus and 'anointed' him when there was a

⁵² See *CCels* 1.42, *PArch* 4.2.9, and the discussion of these two passages in Heine (forthcoming a).

⁵³ This discussion does not appear in the preserved books on John.

⁵⁴ Mk 14:3.

⁵⁵ Jn 12:3.

⁵⁶ See Lk 7:37.

feast for him in her house. And no one is in doubt that the house of obedience ought to be understood to be the church. But that woman whom Luke designates 'a sinner' was not yet worthy to be in Bethany, although she was doing penance for her sins. For she still had too little that she might soon be found in the house of obedience, esteemed as already perfected, neither said to be a 'sinner', nor 'weeping' and washing the Lord's 'feet', but herself, too, pouring ointment 'on' his 'feet'. But Simon is the mystery of obedience, because this is the interpretation of the name, but it is the obedience of the letter, not of the spirit.⁵⁷ This is why, when Jesus lifted him from the letter of the law to the spiritual law, he was no longer only Simon, but was made Peter also, and instead of the building up of the Jewish religion, he was considered worthy for the building up of the church founded on the rock.⁵⁸ Jesus, therefore, was 'in the house' of some obedience, nevertheless, Simon was a 'leper' and still in need of cleansing by Jesus. Luke, however, did not mention that Simon was a leper. I think it was because he was the debtor who owed fifty denaria and had already received their forgiveness, since he had loved little;⁵⁹ nevertheless, although he loved little, 'he asked Jesus to eat with him.'⁶⁰ And 'a woman approached' (not a sinner) according to Matthew and Mark, 'having an alabaster box of expensive ointment.'⁶¹ Notice how cautiously in these who do not refer to her as a sinner, her ointment is praised as expensive. But in Luke, who exposed her as a sinner, the ointment is simply mentioned, and labelled neither expensive nor 'genuine spikenard', so that 'the house' was filled 'with its aroma.'⁶² For till now she had not had ointments of this kind, but the fact that she was able even to anoint the Lord's feet with ointment was great. But of this woman, expensive ointment is mentioned, for it was not suitable that inexpensive ointment be poured 'on the head' of the Saviour.⁶³

And 'the disciples were' neither 'indignant' nor grieved about the ointment of the sinner who anointed the Lord's feet and did not pour it out,⁶⁴ nor did Judas say, 'Why was this ointment not sold for thirty denaria and given to the poor.'⁶⁵ But in Matthew and Mark, 'the disciples are indignant' about the woman and grieve the loss of the ointment which was running from his head onto the rest of his body.⁶⁶ For even though 'that ointment could have been sold for a high price and given to the poor', nevertheless this ought not be done, because it was appropriate that it be poured 'on the head' of Christ in a holy and becoming infusion. And those who endeavour to understand those women in accordance with the straightforward text, may say that the ointment poured 'on the head' of Jesus was praiseworthy. It had such elegance in accordance with the text, that it was poured 'on the head' of so great a master. 'The poor', therefore, did not deserve that ointment, nor was it appropriate

⁵⁷ See 2 Cor 3:6.⁵⁸ See Mt 16:18.⁵⁹ See Lk 7:40-7.⁶⁰ See Lk 7:36.⁶¹ Mt 26:7; Mk 14:3.⁶² See Jn 12:3.⁶³ See Mt 26:7.⁶⁴ See Lk 7:37, 38.⁶⁵ Jn 12:5.⁶⁶ See Mk 14:4; Ps 132:2.

(in respect to its great honour) that it be divided among many, but that, remaining whole, it should be poured 'on the head' of Jesus alone. Because of this also Jesus received the woman who did this and said to the indignant disciples, 'Permit her, and do not bother her, because she has performed a good work on me.'⁶⁷ Praise of this sort of good work is effective up to the point that it exhorts all of us to fill the Lord's head with aromatic and rich works, so that it might also be said of us that we have done a 'good work' on the Lord's head; because we do, indeed, 'always' (as long as we continue in this life) have 'the poor' with us and having, as a work, the care of those who have progressed in the word and have become rich in the wisdom of God, but are not yet capable of 'always', day and night, having with them the Son of God, the Word and Wisdom of God, and all those things that our Lord and Saviour is.⁶⁸

Notice also what he says: 'She has performed a good work on me.' He did not say of the sinner who anointed his feet, 'She has performed a good work on me.'⁶⁹ And if we must also discuss his words, 'She did it for my burial', you will compare with it the words, 'We have been buried with Christ by baptism, and we have been raised with him.'⁷⁰ And consider also the fact that it is not said of the woman in the Gospel according to Luke, 'Truly I say to you, Wherever this Gospel shall be proclaimed in this whole world, this which she has done will be mentioned in her memory', but this has been written of the woman in the Gospel according to Matthew and Mark.⁷¹ For it was right that 'Wherever this Gospel shall be proclaimed in this whole world, this which she has done will be mentioned in her memory' be said, not of her who anointed his feet, but of her who poured ointment 'on the head' of Jesus. If, therefore, we wish that what we have done for Jesus be mentioned about us too, in pouring expensive ointment 'on' his 'head', then let us progress from anointing his feet to pouring expensive ointment 'on' his 'head'.

But it is difficult to explain what the oil is and what the ointment, and what ointment is useful for anointing the body of Christ and what the head. Nevertheless, we will attempt to describe what seems right to us. We recognize most certainly that oil is understood everywhere in the Scriptures to be either a work of mercy (by which the lamp of the Word is fed and shines brightly) or a teaching (by whose continual repetition the word of faith that was kindled in us is fed and burns brighter). Therefore, just as in general everything with which someone is anointed is called oil, but one oil is ointment and another is not, in the same way, one ointment is cheap and another expensive. So, every right action is called a good work, but there is one good work that we do because of people or in relation to people, and there is another that we do because of God and in relation to God. In the same way, in respect to what we do because of God, there is one that is profitable for the use of people, and another that is

⁶⁷ Mk 14:6.⁶⁸ See 1 Cor 1:24; Origen, *ComJn* 1.125-288.⁶⁹ See Lk 7:37.⁷⁰ See Rom 6:4, 5.⁷¹ Mt 26:13; Mk 14:9.

not profitable for the use of people, but only for the glory of God. For example, someone does something good for a person, moved by natural justice, not because of God (how the Gentiles used to act at one time and many people still do); that work is common oil and does not possess a great aroma, nevertheless, it too is acceptable to God, just as Daniel indicates when he says to Nebuchadnezzar who does not know God: 'Listen to my counsel, O king, and redeem your sins with alms.'⁷² Peter also says something like this in Clement, that good works that are done by the unbelieving are useful for them in this age but not also in that for attaining eternal life, and appropriately so because they do not act for the sake of God but for the sake of human nature itself.⁷³ But it is profitable for those who act for the sake of God, that is the faithful, not only in this age but also in that one, and especially in that one.

What the faithful do for the sake of God, however, is ointment with a good aroma. And this work itself of the faithful on behalf of God, which is an ointment, becomes something else for the profit of people, for example, alms, visitations of the sick, reception of foreigners, humility, gentleness, kindness, and other deeds of this nature that benefit people. The person who does these things for Christians anoints the Lord's feet, because these very people are the Lord's feet with which he always walks. That work the repentant especially are accustomed to do for the forgiveness of their sins is said to be an aromatic ointment, but it is not the best. And the person who is zealous for chastity, and continues in 'fasting and prayers,'⁷⁴ and has patience like Job in adversity, and is not afraid to confess the truth of God in trials (all of which have no benefit for other people but are useful only for the glory of God), this is the ointment that anoints the head of the Lord Christ and then the whole body of Christ, that is, it runs down over the whole church. This is the very expensive ointment whose aroma fills the whole house,⁷⁵ that is the church of Christ; and this is a work that belongs not to the repentant, but to saints who have been perfected. To be sure, the teaching that is necessary for people, by which souls that are poor in spiritual goods⁷⁶ are nurtured or perhaps even souls that are feeble in sins, is the cheap ointment with which the feet of the Lord are anointed. Knowledge of the true faith, however, that has reference to God alone is the expensive ointment with which the head of Christ is anointed as God.

78 'Then one of the twelve, who is called Judas Iscariot, went off to the chief priests and said to them: What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver him to you? And they agreed with him for thirty drachmas, and from then he was seeking an opportunity to betray him.'⁷⁷

The name 'Judas' interpreted, means 'confessor'. Since there are two disciples of Christ with this name among the twelve apostles as the evangelist Luke enumerates them, 'Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot,'⁷⁸ therefore,

⁷² Dan 4:24 (Theodotion).

⁷³ See *Clementine Recognitions* 10.2.

⁷⁴ See Lk 2:37.

⁷⁵ See Jn 12:3.

⁷⁶ See Mt 5:3.

⁷⁷ Mt 26:14-16.

⁷⁸ Lk 6:16.

insofar as nothing with Christ is devoid of mystery, I think those two Judases were a mystery of Christians who confess faith in Christ. One part of them remains faithfully with Christ. Judas, the brother of James, was the mystery of these. But the other part, after it has believed and confessed faith in Christ, has left Christ because of greed, and become a betrayer of the truth itself and passed over to the heresies and to the false priests of the false Jews, that is imitators of Christians, and handed Christ, that is 'the Word of Truth,' over to them (so far as they are able) that they may crucify and kill the Word of Truth. 'Judas Iscariot,' who 'went off to the priests' and made an agreement about betraying Christ for a price was the mystery of the latter. I have heard someone explaining that the home region of the traitor Judas means 'suffocated' according to a Hebrew interpretation. If this is so, there is a great agreement between the name of his home region and his own death since he fulfilled the prophecy of the name of his home region when he was suffocated by hanging himself with a rope.⁷⁹ This Judas, therefore, to whom the prophet said, 'But you, a man of one mind with me, my leader and my acquaintance,'⁸⁰ fell, although he had been one of those whom Christ received for leadership of the Christian people. And take note how the statement, 'But you die like men, and fall like one of the princes,'⁸¹ is referred in one instance to that prince who fell 'from heaven like lightning,'⁸² and in another to Judas who had been chosen to the apostolic preeminence and stationed in heaven as it were. Before he had been stationed, he fell like lightning into the ruin of treachery, going (against the one chief priest, who had been made 'priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek'⁸³) 'to' the many 'chief priests' and adversaries of the one highest priest, that he might sell for a price the one wishing to redeem the whole world from the curse of the law⁸⁴ and all sin, and redeem us 'not with corruptible' money, 'but with' his own 'precious blood.'⁸⁵

But let us hear what Judas said to the priests: 'What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver him to you?' For he wished to receive money and to deliver the Word of God, which all do who receive anything corporeal or of this world that they might hand the Saviour and Word of truth that was in them over and cast him out of their soul. And this applies appropriately, by the example of each, to all who commit any sin whatever and despise the Word of God and hand him over because of avarice and for the sake of money or any kind of gain. For people like this appear to call out clearly and say to the hostile powers who grant any gain for the sin of transgressing the Word of God, 'What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver him to you?' But even if he has been handed over, something occurs indeed outside the one who hands him over: decency overcomes those who appear to have received him and asserts itself so that those desiring to eliminate him take no action against him.

⁷⁹ See Mt 27:5.⁸⁰ Ps 54:14.⁸¹ Ps 81:7.⁸² See Lk 10:18.⁸³ See Heb 6:20.⁸⁴ See Gal 3:13.⁸⁵ See 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

'And they decided to give him thirty drachmas,' agreeing that the allotment to him be equal to the years the Saviour was a stranger in this world. For after he had been baptized at age thirty,⁸⁶ he began to proclaim the Gospel, like Joseph, when he had turned thirty, had meted out grain to his brothers.⁸⁷ For just as God had prepared that grain then because of the sons of Israel, but it was also meted out to the Egyptians, so the Gospel had been prepared for the saints, but it was, nevertheless, also proclaimed to the unbelieving and unjust.

'And then he was seeking an opportunity to betray him.' Luke, moreover, has explained clearly what sort of 'opportunity' Judas was seeking when he says: 'And he was seeking an opportunity to betray him apart from the crowd';⁸⁸ that is, when the people were not around him, but he was alone with his disciples. This is also what he did, betraying him after dinner when he would be separated in the garden of Gethsemane. For Judas thought he would have an 'opportunity' after the agreement that he made, when Jesus was not with the multitude. And note if that does not still appear to be an opportunity for the betrayers of the Word of truth who want to betray Christ, God the Word, in a time of persecution of Christians when the multitude of believers is not around the Word of truth, nor is it possible to hinder or hold back the persecutors especially where the faithful are thought to be few. And since there is a time for all things, as Solomon says, 'A time for giving birth and a time for dying'⁸⁹ and the rest, the appropriate time for the betrayers of the Word of truth is when there are not many faithful around Christ.

79 'And on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and said to him: Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Pasch? And Jesus said, Go into the city to a certain person and say to him,' and the rest.⁹⁰

But in Mark it says, 'And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Pasch was being sacrificed, his disciples say to him, Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Pasch? And he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go into the city and as you are entering, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you, and wherever he shall enter, say to the father of the family, The master says, where is my guest-chamber, where I may eat the Pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large furnished place on the upper levels; make preparation for us there.'⁹¹ It thus appears that on one and the same day it was the Pasch when it was necessary to sacrifice the Pasch,⁹² and the Unleavened Bread when it was necessary to remove 'the old leaven' and to eat unleavened bread with the flesh of a lamb. The day of the Pasch was one day, but that of unleavened bread was seven, the day of the Pasch, of course, being counted

⁸⁶ See Lk 3:23.

⁸⁷ See Gn 41:46.

⁸⁸ Lk 22:6.

⁸⁹ Prov 3:1, 2.

⁹⁰ Mt 26:17-19.

⁹¹ Mk 14:12-15. Greek fragment: But another says, 'One day before the Unleavened Bread,' calling to mind that day on which the Pasch was to be sacrificed in the evening, and the rest.

⁹² See Lk 22:7.

with the other six. Some ignorant person, in agreement with the Ebionites, may ask (because Jesus celebrated the Pasch in a Jewish manner corporeally, as also the first day of Unleavened Bread and the Pasch), if it is not appropriate that we too, as imitators of Christ, do the same? He does not consider that 'when the fullness of time had come' and Jesus had been sent, he was made 'of a woman', 'made under the law', not that he might leave those who were under the law under the law, but that he might lead them out of the law.⁹³ If, therefore, he came to lead out those who were under the law, how much more inappropriate is it that those who previously were outside the law should enter into the law?

We, therefore, depart from the letter of the law, but establish the underlying spiritual meaning of the law. By our spiritual practice, we fulfil everything that is commanded there to be practised corporeally. For we cast out 'the old heaven' 'of evil and wickedness', and celebrate the Pasch 'in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'.⁹⁴ Christ eats with us in accord with the will of the lamb who says, 'Unless you shall have eaten my flesh and drunk my blood, you will not have life continuing in you'.⁹⁵ He it is 'who takes away the sin of the world'⁹⁶ and forbids the true destroyer (not just of Egypt, but the destroyer of the whole human race) to touch us as we celebrate the festivity of the Pasch with himself. And since the Lord himself has been stationed with us, we, with the disciples of Christ, ascend from the lower places to the higher, where there is a guest-chamber which is represented by the intellect that functions as the father of the family in each person. And this upper house in us should be large so that it may contain Jesus, the Word of God, the Wisdom, the Truth, the Peace, and everything that the Son of God is. He is not contained except by those who are magnanimous in understanding. And this house that has been prepared for the Son of God by the father of the family, the intellect, should not only be in an upper region, nor only large, but also cleaned and containing no filth of evil at all, which has been collected and cast out by the broom of the law as it were. And that house should also be in the city of God, that is, in the church. Moreover, the owner of that house should have a name not known to anyone at all. This is why Jesus said mysteriously, 'Go to a certain person', that those preparing the Pasch for Christ might say, 'the Master says: I will keep the Pasch with my disciples at your house'. They also relate to the father of the family what Jesus says: 'The Master says, where is the guest-chamber, where I will eat the Pasch with my disciples';⁹⁷ so that that father of the family who prepares a guest-chamber for Jesus and his disciples may show them an upper region furnished, prepared, and large, so that Jesus might come there and celebrate with his disciples.

And I think that the man 'carrying a jar of water', who meets the disciples when they enter the city, whom Jesus wished his disciples to follow when he entered his house, was carrying simple water to the house that it might not

⁹³ See Gal 4:4, 5.

⁹⁴ See 1 Cor 5:7, 8.

⁹⁵ See Jn 6:53.

⁹⁶ Jn 1:29.

⁹⁷ Mk 14:14.

only be cleaned, but also scrubbed completely clean with the water. He was someone ministering to the father of the family (that is, the intellect) by carrying water for cleansing in an earthen vessel, 'that the excellence of the power might be of God'.⁹⁸ Or, he was at least providing drinking water in that earthen vessel so that the Son of God might offer the fruit of the vine.⁹⁹ That intellect, however, as a servant of the law and the prophets, offers water which may be mixed with the wine of the word of the Gospel. We, therefore, who choose to belong to the church, wishing to celebrate the Pasch with Jesus, follow that man who is carrying the vessel of that kind of water,¹⁰⁰ who I think is a giver of the law of Moses carrying spiritual teaching in stories of corporeal events. Those, however, who approach the law and the prophets as if they were the sayings of God himself, but do not follow him who spiritually carries the vessel 'of living water',¹⁰¹ neither celebrate the Pasch with Jesus nor drink the cup of the new testament.¹⁰² The disciples, however, prepare the Pasch for Jesus and, after the words of the disciples with which they instruct the father of the family (that is, the intellect), the divinity of the only-begotten¹⁰³ may come and eat with his disciples in the fore-mentioned house. We ought to know, however, that those caught up in the feastings and cares of this world do not ascend into that upper house, nor do they see its vastness or contemplate the adornment of that couch. Therefore, they do not celebrate the Pasch with Jesus, nor do they receive the bread blessed by him, or the cup of the new testament.

80 'But when it was evening he reclined with his disciples, and as they were eating he said to them: Truly I say to you that one of you will betray me'.¹⁰⁴

While the disciples were eating the Pasch as the law commanded, Jesus—who 'knew what was in man' and for this reason 'had no need that anyone give testimony to him about man'¹⁰⁵—said of Judas, with his usual formula for uttering an oath, 'Truly I say to you that one of you will betray me'. Although he was able from the beginning to point out the betrayer specifically, he did not do this, but said in general, 'One of you will betray me'. He did this so that by the testimony of a struck heart the condition of the individuals might be proven. This resulted in the goodness of the disciples becoming visible, because they believed the words of Christ more than their own conscience.¹⁰⁶ It also showed the wickedness of Judas because he did not believe the one who knew his own plans, so that he should be troubled or sad—let it be that at the first he thought, in a human fashion, that he escaped notice¹⁰⁷—he who later saw his own conscience¹⁰⁸ set out in his own words, the first of which belonged to infidelity and the second to shamelessness.

⁹⁸ See 2 Cor 4:7.

⁹⁹ See Mt 26:29.

¹⁰⁰ See Mk 14:13.

¹⁰¹ See Jn 4:10.

¹⁰² See Lk 22:20.

¹⁰³ See Jn 1:14.

¹⁰⁴ Mt 26:20-1.

¹⁰⁵ Jn 2:25.

¹⁰⁶ Greek fragment: But the remaining disciples, although they had a clear conscience, agonized over that statement rather than trusting in themselves.

¹⁰⁷ Greek fragment: For he thought that he escaped the Lord's notice, and the rest.

¹⁰⁸ Klostermann posits a lacuna at this point.

81 'And they became very sad and began to say individually: It's not I, is it Lord?'¹⁰⁹

Someone will ask, If the eleven apostles had a clear conscience (that they were free from any betrayal of the teacher), why did they 'become sad' on hearing this as if it could possibly happen that it was one of them of whom he was speaking? But I think that each of the disciples knew about these things Jesus was teaching. They knew that human nature is changeable and susceptible to evil, and that it can happen in the wrestling 'against principalities and powers and rulers of this world of darkness'¹¹⁰ that a person may fall and perform evil, either overpowered, or the victim of violence from the hostile powers. Each of the disciples, therefore, thinking that he himself might be the traitor who was foreknown, became very 'sad' because of his words, 'One of you will betray me'. Each 'began to say', as if he did not know what was to be in his own case, 'It's not I, is it Lord?' And if it is reasonable that because of this each of them said out of fear, 'It's not I, is it Lord?', we who are weak must fear for all future things, for we have not yet received the wisdom of perfection in relation to which the apostle says, 'For I am confident that neither death nor life' and all that follows 'can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.'¹¹¹ The person who is not yet perfect, however, doubts himself, thinking he could also fall. Paul, writing to the Corinthians about such human weakness said, 'But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself become a castaway'.¹¹² And take note of his words: 'Lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself become a castaway'. He makes his declaration in this way as if fearing that perhaps he could also fall and become a castaway. But his assertion, 'I am confident'¹¹³ and what follows, comes from a person who has no fear and is strong because of his perfection, since a thousand opposing powers would not be able to separate him 'from the love of Christ'.¹¹⁴ But the fact that the apostles were still weak and justly afraid is clear from the statement of him who knew the intention of individuals, 'You will all be made to stumble in me in this night'.¹¹⁵

And it is quite clear from that which is written about Peter that someone intending better things, is occasionally diverted to evil, overpowered in the wrestling with the contrary powers. He indeed, reflecting on how resolutely he was devoted to Christ, did not answer deceptively but from a truthful heart (as much as was in him), that 'If all should be made to stumble, I alone will not be made to stumble'.¹¹⁶ The Saviour, however, knowing that he will be weak in his promises, and that a little fear of man will cause him to withdraw from his better intention, said to him: 'Truly I say to you that in this night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times'.¹¹⁷ It is not inappropriate to say repeatedly

¹⁰⁹ Mt 26:22.

¹¹² 1 Cor 9:27.

¹¹⁵ Mt 26:31.

¹¹⁰ Eph 6:12.

¹¹³ Rom 8:38.

¹¹⁶ Mt 26:33.

¹¹¹ Rom 8:38, 39.

¹¹⁴ See Rom 8:39.

¹¹⁷ Mt 26:34.

to such people, 'Do not boast in the Lord, for you do not know what the coming day may bring forth.'¹¹⁸ Paul says in a similar manner, 'Brothers, if a person be overtaken in some fault, you who are spiritual strengthen such a one in a meek spirit, considering lest you also be tempted,'¹¹⁹ teaching that our death is uncertain even though we may perhaps intend better things. And remembering all these things, that we do not know 'what the coming day may bring forth' for us, we will never be puffed up or haughty or boast, although we may know that we have many good qualities, just as Paul, when he had said of himself, 'I am conscious of nothing in myself,' added, 'but I am not thereby justified,'¹²⁰ although he knows that God sanctifies those whom he has foreknown and calls those 'whom he has predestined.'¹²¹

82 'He who dips his hand with me in the dish, this man will betray me.'¹²²

Seeing them in fear about themselves he indicated the betrayer with the evidence of the prophetic voice which says, 'He who eats my bread with me has magnified guile against me.'¹²³ Now there is no disagreement between that and the statement, 'He who dips his hand with me in the dish, this man will betray me.' And this also should be considered, that the Saviour, wishing by all means to teach us, gives his disciples the sign about Judas the betrayer from the fact that he had, along with Jesus, put his 'hand into the dish' in which (as I think) they were dipping the meat of the Pasch as they were eating. But I think Jesus said this wishing to make Judas' great evil clear, because the man whom he had received at the common table and had eaten with (perhaps because he was doing well at the beginning), has himself betrayed Jesus who surrounds him with so many honours. He did not remember sharing the salt, the table, or the bread of Jesus, but because of the promise of thirty silver coins he passed by all those things and betrayed the granter of such great good things. And this is truly the characteristic practice of people who are excessively evil, that after salt and bread they plot against people, especially when they have suffered no injury from those with whom they have shared bread and salt. For Daniel prophesies in this way of certain dangerous and very evil men of this kind and says, 'They speak false words at one table.'¹²⁴

But if you can understand the spiritual table, the spiritual food, and the Lord's supper, all of which were considered worthy by Christ, you will see the excessive magnitude of that evil with which he betrayed the Saviour, the master and fellow participant in the divine table and cup (and he did this on the day of the Pasch). He took no thought of either the love of the teacher for the good things pertaining to the body or his teaching on spiritual matters which were always delivered without ill-will. Such are all those in the church who plot against their brothers with whom they have frequently shared the same table of the body of Christ and the same cup of his blood. But if it is also necessary

¹¹⁸ Prov 27:1.

¹¹⁹ Gal 6:1.

¹²⁰ 1 Cor 4:4.

¹²¹ See Rom 8:29, 30.

¹²² Mt 26:23.

¹²³ Ps 40:10.

¹²⁴ Dan 11:27 (Theodotion).

to offer an interpretation of the 'dish' itself, we refrain from such interpretation lest we seem to some to say something trivial. Nevertheless, let the person who wishes also to find something moral in this word consider the passage in the law where the leaders of the individual tribes offer gifts at the dedication of the altar.¹²⁵ Perhaps he will understand there too some dish to be interpreted: 'On the first day,' it says, 'Naasson, son of Aminadab, leader of the tribe of Judah, offered his gift. And he offered as his gift a silver dish; its weight one hundred and thirty, and one silver shallow cup of seventy shekels according to the holy shekel'.¹²⁶

83 'And the Son of Man indeed goes, as it has been written of him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man will be betrayed'.¹²⁷

So far as what was seen, Jesus was indeed going to suffer by the cross; but so far as what was truly the case, he was both going and remaining in the world with his disciples, guarding them in their faith. For unless he invisibly guarded their hearts, they would not have been capable of maintaining their faith in him, especially once they had seen him dead. And he did not say, 'Woe to that man' by whom he is betrayed, but 'through whom he is betrayed,' showing the other by whom he was betrayed (that is, by the devil). Judas himself, however, was the agent of the betrayal. 'Woe', however, not only to Judas, but to all betrayers of Christ, for whoever betrays the disciples of Christ betrays Christ himself. Therefore, they are indeed betrayed by the devil; nevertheless, it is through those people and, consequently, 'Woe' to those people. For if the devil commits every evil among people by means of people, whoever is killed by another has been killed through the devil himself even if not by him. And if a judge should kill someone by unjustly passing a death sentence against a person, you should know that the judge, by giving 'place to the devil'¹²⁸ in himself has offered himself to the devil as an agent for the killing of an innocent person. 'It would have been better for that man if he had not been born'.¹²⁹ This means, 'It would have been good' for that man 'if he had not been born', because he was not worthy of this good gift of being born. But because he was worthy of his choice that this service of betrayal be accomplished through him, therefore he had been born for his evil action that he might become involved in the evil that he deserved in accord with his course of life.

84 'And Judas answered and said, It is not I is it, Rabbi?'¹³⁰

Notice how Judas, anticipating only a word from Christ about himself, did not cut short Christ's speaking with his own reply, but after all of them, he answered, saying, 'It is not I is it, Rabbi?' He called him teacher, not from his affection for learning but because of the custom of designating him teacher, as if mocking him because he was called teacher when he did not deserve this

¹²⁵ See Num 7:10-11.

¹²⁶ Num 7:12-13. Origen offers a very brief interpretation of Num 7:13 in *HomEz* 7.2.

¹²⁷ Mt 26:24.

¹²⁸ See Eph 4:27.

¹²⁹ Mt 26:24.

¹³⁰ Mt 26:25.

title. 'And Jesus said to him, You have said it,' so that he might judge him 'from' his own 'mouth',¹³¹ because Judas had said, 'It is not I is it, Rabbi?' as if he were in doubt when he was not at all in doubt in his conscience, but only pretended to be in doubt about it. For he did not share that fear that the other apostles had; he, rather, pretending fear, spoke without it. And perhaps, therefore, after all the apostles had asked one by one, and after Christ had spoken about himself, at the very last, he also asked, as if from some deliberation and pondered judgement, so that by asking like the other disciples he might, meanwhile, speed up his own plan of betrayal, for true and oppressing sorrow does not tolerate delay, as that sorrow of the apostles had not tolerated it.

85 'And as they are eating, Jesus takes bread and giving thanks, breaks it and gives it to his disciples saying, Take and eat, for this is my body. And taking a cup and giving thanks he gives it to them saying, Drink from it all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'¹³²

That bread that God the Word indicates to be his 'body' is the word for the nourishing of souls, the word proceeding from God the Word, and the bread from the bread of heaven which has been placed on the table of which it is written, 'You prepared a table in my sight against those who afflict me.'¹³³ And that cup that God the Word indicates to be his 'blood' is the word, quite obviously intoxicating and inebriating the hearts of those who drink it. This is in the cup of which it is written, 'and how intoxicating is your cup!'¹³⁴ And that cup is the offspring of the true vine who says, 'I am the true vine', and it is the blood of that grape which, when it had been placed in the wine-press of the passion, produced this cup, just as the bread also is the word of Christ made from that wheat that 'fell into the earth' and 'bore much fruit'.¹³⁵ For God the Word was not saying that that visible 'bread' which he was holding in his hands was his 'body', but the Word in whose mystery that bread was to be broken. Nor was he saying that that visible cup was his 'blood', but the Word in whose mystery that cup was to be poured out. For what else can the 'body' of God the Word or his 'blood' be than the word that nourishes and the word that 'gladdens the heart'?¹³⁶ And why did he not say, 'This is the bread of the new testament, just as he said, "This is the blood of the new testament?" Because the 'bread' is the word of righteousness which souls eat and are nourished, but the cup is the word of the recognition of Christ in relation to the mystery of his nativity and passion. Since, therefore, the covenant of God has been established in the blood of Christ's passion for us so that by believing the Son of God to have been born and suffered according to the flesh we may be saved, not in our righteousness by which alone, without faith in the passion of Christ

¹³¹ See Lk 19:22.

¹³² Mt 26:26-8.

¹³³ See Jn 1:1; 6:31; Ps 22(23):5.

¹³⁴ Ps 22:5.

¹³⁵ Jn 15:1; 12:24.

¹³⁶ See Wis 16:26; Ps 103(104):15.

it is not possible to be saved, therefore, it was said only of the cup, 'This is' the cup¹³⁷ 'of the covenant'.

86 'Truly I say to you, that from now I will not drink of the fruit of this vine until I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.'¹³⁸

But it is also said in a similar manner of the bread in Luke: 'With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you. I say to you that from now I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'¹³⁹ The Saviour will, therefore, eat that bread and drink that paschal cup renewed 'in the kingdom of God', and he will eat it and drink it with his disciples. For just as 'he did not think it robbery to be equal with God, but humbled himself even to death', so he will eat the bread and drink 'from the fruit of the vine' and drink it 'new', and because of his great goodness and love for humanity he will eat and drink with his disciples 'when he shall have delivered the kingdom to God the Father'.¹⁴⁰ For take note that he says: 'When I shall have drunk it new with you,' not at another time than 'in the kingdom of my Father'. But also, in another passage, 'The kingdom of God is not food and drink.'¹⁴¹ For physically and in the likeness of present food and drink, 'the kingdom of God is not food and drink' [but spiritually it is 'food and drink']¹⁴² to those who show themselves worthy of heavenly bread and the bread of angels and that food of which the Saviour says, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.'¹⁴³ But since it is possible to show from many passages of the Scriptures that we will eat and drink 'in the kingdom of God', especially from the passage where it is written, 'Blessed is the one who shall have eaten bread in the kingdom of God',¹⁴⁴ this Pasch, therefore, will be fulfilled 'in the kingdom of God' and Jesus will eat it with his disciples and will drink. And the words of the apostle, 'Let no one judge you about food and drink and other things that are a shadow of future things', will have their clarification in relation to future mysteries about spiritual foods and drinks, of which the statements in the Law about foods and drinks will have been a shadow.¹⁴⁵ And it is clear that we will eat true food and drink true drink 'in the kingdom of God', and by this means build up and strengthen that life that is most true.

And the one who is young 'in Christ' and still of the flesh in Christ¹⁴⁶ understands the words in their normal sense that 'Jesus takes bread' and likewise 'takes a cup'. But the one who is more experienced will ask from whom 'Jesus takes'. For when God gives, he takes and gives to those who are worthy to receive the bread and cup from God. And it indicates how God gives bread also when Jacob says, 'If the Lord my God will be with me and give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, I will give a tenth to you, O Lord, of everything you

¹³⁷ See Lk 22:20.

¹³⁸ Mt 26:29.

¹³⁹ Lk 22:15, 16.

¹⁴⁰ See Lk 22:16; Phil 2:6, 8; 1 Cor 15:24.

¹⁴¹ Rom 14:17.

¹⁴² Gap in the text. Klostermann's suggestion for the missing words.

¹⁴³ See Ps 77:25; Jn 4:34.

¹⁴⁴ See Lk 22:16; 14:15.

¹⁴⁵ Col 2:16, 17; Heb 10:1.

¹⁴⁶ See 1 Cor 3:1, 3.

give to me, whatever it is'.¹⁴⁷ Likewise, it has been written in the Gospel according to John, 'Moses did not give you bread, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven'.¹⁴⁸ And to these who are eating and equally celebrating the feast with him, Jesus always 'takes bread' from the Father and gives 'thanks' and breaks it and gives it to his 'disciples' in relation to the capacity each of them has to receive it. And he gives it 'saying, Take and eat', and when he feeds them with this bread he also shows it to be his proper 'body', since he himself is the Word which we have need of both now and when it shall be fulfilled 'in the kingdom of God'. At the present, it is not yet fulfilled, but it is fulfilled then, when we too shall have been prepared to receive that full Pasch, because he who did not come 'to destroy the law but to fulfil it' is coming to fulfil it.¹⁴⁹ Now he fulfils it 'darkly as in a mirror' of fulfilment, 'but then' he fulfils it 'face to face' 'when what is perfect has come'.¹⁵⁰

If, therefore, we too wish to receive the 'bread' of blessing from Jesus who is accustomed to give it, let us go 'into the city' to the house of a certain person where Jesus is celebrating 'the Pasch with his disciples', where his friends are preparing it for him, and let us ascend to the upper portion of the house, 'a large room furnished and prepared', where Jesus, 'taking the cup' from his Father 'and giving thanks', gives it 'to those' who shall have ascended with him, 'saying, Drink, for this is my blood of the new testament'.¹⁵¹ This is both drunk and poured out. It is drunk by the disciples, but 'it is poured out for the forgiveness of sins' committed by those by whom it is drunk and poured out. And if you should ask how it is also 'poured out', investigate along with this word the statement, 'Because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts'.¹⁵² But if 'the blood of the testament' has been poured into our heart 'for the remission of' our 'sins', when that drinkable blood has been poured forth into our heart, all the sins that we have previously committed are forgiven and abolished. And when the cup has been taken, he who says, 'Drink from this all of you', does not desert us when we are drinking, but drinks it with us (since he himself is in each one), because alone and without him we are not able either to eat of that bread or drink 'of the fruit' of that true 'vine'.¹⁵³ Do not be amazed that he himself both is the bread and eats the bread with us, and is the drink of the fruit of the vine and drinks it with us. For the Word of God is almighty and is called by different titles. He is innumerable in relation to the multitude of the virtues, since he himself, one being, is every virtue.

Next, he was teaching the disciples who were celebrating the feast with the teacher and had received the 'bread' of blessing and had eaten the 'body' of the Word and drunk the 'cup' of thanksgiving, to sing a hymn to the Father for all these things and to pass over from one height to another, because a believer can never do anything in a valley. This is why they ascended 'the Mount of

¹⁴⁷ Gn 28:20-2.¹⁴⁸ Jn 6:32.¹⁴⁹ See Mt 5:17.¹⁵⁰ 1 Cor 13:12, 10.¹⁵¹ See Mk 14:13-15, 23-4.¹⁵² Rom 5:5.¹⁵³ See Jn 15:1.

Olives', where every single olive can say, as if it were a tree producing fruit, 'And I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God'.¹⁵⁴ And they who have not yet been made, as it were, 'a fruitful olive tree in the house of God', but are still 'like olive shoots around the' spiritual 'table' of his Father, are able to be on the Mount 'of Olives' of which Zechariah also prophesies.¹⁵⁵ And how appropriately the mount of mercy was chosen as the place where he would foretell the scandal of his disciples' weakness, because they did not wish that it happen. Nevertheless, he foretold what was to be, prepared even then not to reject the disciples when they disperse, but to receive them back when they return.

87 'Then Jesus says to them, All of you will be scandalized in me tonight, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed. But when I shall have arisen, I will go before you into Galilee'.¹⁵⁶

Those who are scandalized are not scandalized in the day, but in the 'night', and in that night in which Jesus is betrayed. For in the same way Peter too denies, not in the day but in the night, and in the night in which light had not yet dawned, for he denies before the crow of the cock.¹⁵⁷ But if anyone should ask how the disciples were scandalized, after such great signs and wonders, and words that were not spoken from an inferior power (since they produced signs and wonders), let this person know that Jesus wishes to show by this statement that just as 'no one can say Jesus is Lord without the Holy Spirit', so no one without the Holy Spirit can be without scandal.¹⁵⁸ And when Jesus' words, 'All of you will be scandalized in this night', were fulfilled, 'at that time the Holy Spirit was not yet, for Jesus had not yet been glorified'.¹⁵⁹ But if we, who after that event have confessed the Lord Jesus in the Holy Spirit because 'those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' shall have been scandalized or denied after the Holy Spirit, we will have no room for excuse, as if we were scandalized without the Holy Spirit or deny without the Holy Spirit. Those, indeed were scandalized while they still stood in the night as it were, but for us 'the night has' already 'advanced, and the day has drawn near', therefore, 'let us walk honourably as in the day'.¹⁶⁰ And he who walks honourably is in the light, and he who is in the light does not deny Christ, because he is not in the 'night'. But at that time, they were scandalized in the 'night' (just as the Lord himself testifies), since according to the Scripture, the Father 'did not spare his only Son, but delivered him' on behalf of all of us to suffering 'for us' so that the 'sheep of the flock' experienced the 'scandal' briefly, but afterwards were gathered by the risen Christ. He also preceded those 'into Galilee' who

¹⁵⁴ Ps 51:10.

¹⁵⁵ Ps 127:3; see Zach 14:4.

¹⁵⁶ Mt 26:31–2.

¹⁵⁷ See Mt 26:69–74.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor 12:3.

¹⁵⁹ Jn 7:39. Klostermann's text has 'honoured' instead of 'glorified'. I have chosen the latter on the basis of the text of Jn 7:39 and the reading 'glorified' given in Klostermann's apparatus from the commentary on Matthew by Raschsius Radbertus (PL 120.31–994) which, according to Vogt (1999d) 21, often agrees nearly verbally with Origen's *Commentary*.

¹⁶⁰ Rom 13:12, 13.

wished to follow him into Galilee of the Gentiles so that 'the people who sat in darkness might see a great light, and light might dawn on those who were sitting in the region and shadow of death'.¹⁶¹

88 'And Peter answered and said to him, If all shall be scandalized, I will never be scandalized. And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you that in this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times. Peter says to him, Even if it should be my lot to die with you, I will not deny you. And all the disciples spoke likewise'.¹⁶²

The apostle says in the Epistle to the Romans, 'May God be true, and every human being a liar, as it has been written'.¹⁶³ He is not instructing every human being to become a liar, but is relating that each one is a liar, of whom the Psalm says, 'I said when I lost my mental power, Every human being is a liar'.¹⁶⁴ And when this 'Peter' heard the Saviour say, 'You will all be scandalized in me in this night', he declared that our Lord was a liar, when he said self-confidently, 'If all should be scandalized, I will not be scandalized'. He does not consider that he who said, 'I am the truth', could not lie. This is why, in my opinion, 'all' the disciples were only 'scandalized' in Jesus, but 'Peter', who thought he could make the truth a lie, was not only scandalized, but also abandoned, and even denied Jesus because of his rash assertion in relation to the scandal.

And since he spoke not only rashly, but almost even irreligiously, when he said, 'Even if all should be scandalized in you, I will not be scandalized', and made his great announcement with no consideration of how uncertain human nature is, therefore he was not moderately abandoned, so that although he denied, he would certainly do it only once. He was abandoned so completely that he denied 'three times' so that the rashness of his assertion was proven by a single maid raising this question and saying, 'You were also with Jesus the Galilean' ***,¹⁶⁵ and he denied 'before all saying, I don't know what you are saying', and again he denied, not simply but 'with an oath', and a third time not only with an oath but with a curse, saying, 'I do not know the man'.¹⁶⁶ This teaches us never to promise anything without consideration of our human condition, as if we might be able to fulfil the confession of Christ or any of the precepts of God on our own, since the apostle admonishes us and says, 'Do not be proud, but fear'.¹⁶⁷ For after he had heard, 'You will all be scandalized in this night', Peter ought to have asked the Lord and said, 'Even if all should be scandalized in you', let it not happen to me, that 'I' may not be scandalized, and, grant me this gift especially, that 'I' not fall into denial or be scandalized immediately when 'all' your disciples shall be scandalized. For if he had asked, perhaps the maids and other servants would have been removed from him and he would not have denied; for it was impossible that once the question had been

¹⁶¹ See Rom 8:32; Mt 28:10; 4:16.

¹⁶² Mt 26:33-5.

¹⁶³ Rom 3:4.

¹⁶⁴ Ps 115:2.

¹⁶⁵ Klostermann thinks that words from Mt 26:71 and 73 are missing here.

¹⁶⁶ Mt 26:74.

¹⁶⁷ Rom 11:20.

asked he could say, 'Jesus is Lord' 'in the Holy Spirit' or might have confessed, since 'the Holy Spirit had not yet been given'.¹⁶⁸

But you will ask if it were possible that he not be scandalized, since the Saviour makes the all-embracing statement, 'All of you will be scandalized in me.' Someone will respond to this question that, since he orally predicts most truthfully that 'all of you' will be scandalized, what Jesus had predicted had to happen. But another will say that he who had been persuaded by the entreaty of the Ninevites and did not do what he had predicted through Jonah (because of their repentance) could have removed the scandal from Peter by the latter's earnest prayer. But as it is, his presumptuous promise made from his obvious affection, but lacking in caution, became the reason he not only was scandalized but also denied 'three times.' You will ask in addition if perhaps he would not have denied, if after he heard Jesus say, 'Truly I say to you, before the cock crows in this night, you will deny me three times,' Peter had not added, 'If it should be my lot to die with you, I will not deny you,' but had earnestly pleaded, since his denial was foreseen, that it might be removed from him. And another says that since Jesus had said, 'All of you will be scandalized in me,' Peter's appeal to receive help that he not be scandalized would have had a place, for Jesus had not put forth the announcement, 'all of you will be scandalized in me,' with an amen. But when Peter had pronounced with the affirmation of an oath, it was not possible that he not deny. For if the oath had been the 'amen' of Christ, Peter would have lied saying, 'Amen I say to you,' if he had said truly, 'I will not deny you.'

The other disciples of Jesus, however, seem to me with foresight and thoughtfulness (in relation to what he had first said, 'You will all be scandalized in me in this night') to have said nothing, and not to have vowed as though they would not be scandalized, for they perceived that Jesus was predicting these things truly. And furthermore, they all promised, like Peter, 'Even if it should be our 'lot to die with you,' we will 'not' deny you. It was said only to Peter, 'Truly I say to you, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' Peter, indeed, did not respond properly after Christ's prophesy about him denying 'three times' before the crow of the cock. The others, however, as if they had not been included in that prophecy nor were bound by the words spoken to Peter, responded with promises, but did not desire to make the Lord a liar by their promises as Peter had wished to do. For just as on the high mountain when Jesus was transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared in glory at the same time with him, Peter said, 'Do you want us to make three tabernacles here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah? not knowing what he was saying'¹⁶⁹ (as the Scripture testifies of him), so here too, 'not knowing what he was saying,' he said, 'If it should be my lot to die with you, I will not deny you.' For it was not within human possibility 'to die' with Jesus when he was

¹⁶⁸ See 1 Cor 12:3; Jn 7:39.

¹⁶⁹ Mt 17:4.

dying for all of us that we might live, because all human beings were sinful and needed another to die for them, not themselves to die for others.

89 'Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane'.¹⁷⁰

To the person who knows how to interpret Hebrew names, even the name of this plot of land that is called 'Gethsemane' is useful for making that place manifest, for it is not without reason that even the name of the plot of land has been placed in Matthew and Mark.¹⁷¹ But passing over that, we suggest only in what way Jesus comes to this 'plot of land that' is called 'Gethsemane' with the disciples, taking them from that place where he has eaten the Pasch with them. For when he was betrayed, it would not have been appropriate to be taken from that place where he had eaten the Pasch with the disciples. But it was appropriate, prior to the betrayal, to pray and for the one praying to choose a pure place for prayer, for he knew that just as air differs from purer air, so does the ground of a holy place from that of a more holy place, as it is written, 'The place on which you are standing is holy ground'.¹⁷² And you will ask if in addition to the disposition of the one praying, prayer becomes purer and more acceptable also from the place of prayer where one prays, as it is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer', of which it is also said elsewhere, 'He heard my voice from his holy temple'.¹⁷³ Now a Jewish person has no doubt about such a matter, but the person who, because of the teaching of Christ, has withdrawn from 'Jewish fables'¹⁷⁴ and from everything that they understand in a physical manner will say that one prayer differs from another not because of the place but because it is better to pray with no one than with evil people. But take as an example to demonstrate that tradition the fact that when Jesus was in the house of Jairus the priest to pray for his dead daughter, 'he cast out all' and chose only those three who had been with him on the mountain and were witnesses of his transfiguration.¹⁷⁵ For it is on this account also that the custom is practised in the churches of Christ to remove those who are committing obvious trespasses from the common prayer so that no 'little leaven' 'from a heart that is' not 'pure' destroy the total cohesion and agreement of the unity of those praying.¹⁷⁶

But this sense also contains a legitimate charge against those who misunderstand it and use it as an opportunity to say to their neighbour, 'Do not approach me because I am pure'.¹⁷⁷ This is also what the Pharisee did to the publican standing far off, who was striking his breast and saying, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner'.¹⁷⁸ We ought to do this in due measure, therefore, so that, out of respect for prayer (in accordance with him who said, 'If two among you agree

¹⁷⁰ Mt 26:36. ¹⁷¹ See Mk 14:32. ¹⁷² Ex 3:5. ¹⁷³ Is 56:7; Ps 17:7.

¹⁷⁴ See Tit 1:14. ¹⁷⁵ See Mk 5:40; Mt 17:1-2. ¹⁷⁶ See 1 Cor 5:6, 7; 2 Tim 2:22.

¹⁷⁷ Perhaps a Montanist saying. Origen cites it also elsewhere: above *SerMt* 20; *HomPs* 37, 2.1; *FragTit* (PG 14.1306A-B), where it is attributed to the Cataphrygians.

¹⁷⁸ Lk 18:13.

together, everything they ask will occur for them'¹⁷⁹), we not pray with the unworthy, nor despise the lowly by putting ourselves before them, because of the fall associated with boasting (according to him who said, 'He who exalts himself will be humbled'¹⁸⁰). We have treated these matters, however, because of the saying, 'Sit here, while I go there to pray'.

90 'And taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sad and distressed'.¹⁸¹

Or, as Mark put it, 'He began to be afraid and distressed'.¹⁸² He also took these same disciples up the mountain when he was to be transfigured, and again, when he went to the daughter of Jairus, the priest.¹⁸³ And I ask if perhaps Jesus saw something especially mysterious in the time prior to his suffering when he went and wanted to pray. For perhaps he saw 'the kings and princes of the earth' standing gathered 'together against the Lord and against' himself, 'his Christ'.¹⁸⁴ And because those multitudes were drawn up, as it were, and were mighty in evil, 'he began to be sad and distressed' or even 'afraid'. Now take note that he did not say, 'He was sad and distressed', but, 'He began to be sad and distressed', for there is a big difference between being sad and beginning to be sad. If, therefore, someone defending the human passions mentions to us that Jesus himself was also sad, let him hear that 'he' who 'was tempted in all things like us, apart from sin',¹⁸⁵ did not experience the passion of sadness itself, but had been made in accord with human nature only in the initial stage of sadness and fear to show his disciples in the present circumstances (especially Peter who had a high opinion of himself) what he also said to them later, that 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'.¹⁸⁶ One can never trust the flesh, but must always be apprehensive where it is concerned. Reckless confidence leads to boasting; fear of weakness, however, encourages taking refuge in the help of God, just as our Lord himself goes forward 'a little' and falls 'on his face' and 'prays'. 'He began', therefore, to be sad and distressed in accord with his human nature which was subject to such passions, but not in accord with his divine power which was far removed from passion of this kind.¹⁸⁷

We say these things about Jesus so that you not think that he was a man, like some heresies, but that God had received the true nature of a human body and 'was able' 'to sympathize with our weaknesses' because he himself had been encompassed in the infirm nature of a human body, 'likewise also himself participating' in flesh and blood because the children too (of whom he says, 'Behold, I and the children whom God gave me') 'participate in flesh and

¹⁷⁹ See Mt 18:19.

¹⁸⁰ Lk 18:14.

¹⁸¹ Mt 26:37.

¹⁸² Mk 14:33.

¹⁸³ See Mt 17:1, 2; Mk 5:22, 23, 37.

¹⁸⁴ See Ps 2:2.

¹⁸⁵ Heb 4:15.

¹⁸⁶ Mt 26:41.

¹⁸⁷ Greek fragment: Now the passion of grief or of distress would not have affected his divine nature itself, for it is beyond all passion. We say, however, that the Logos-become-flesh wished also to condescend to the limitations of humanity etc.

blood'.¹⁸⁸ Seeing, therefore, the imminent struggle he faced, which for him was not 'against flesh and blood' but against more 'kings of the earth' standing side by side 'and princes' gathered 'as one against' him than had ever been gathered, 'he began' 'to be afraid'; or 'to be distressed', suffering nothing more of distress or fear than their beginning.¹⁸⁹ For it is not written that he was afraid or was distressed, but that 'he began to be afraid'¹⁹⁰ and 'he began to be distressed', since he also said, 'My soul is distressed even to death'. This seems to mean something like this, as if he should say, Distress has begun in me so that I not completely lack a taste of distress; it is not always present but is in me up to the time of my death so that when I shall have died to sin,¹⁹¹ I shall die also to all distress, whose beginning alone I experienced.

91 'Stay here and watch with me'.¹⁹²

As if he should say: Although I said to the other disciples, 'Sit here while I go there to pray', and I brought you three to this point, I do not want you to go further, for you are not yet able.¹⁹³ For this reason, stay 'here' vigilant, as I also am vigilant, knowing that I ordered the others to sit there as inferior, keeping them free from this combat. I brought you, as stronger, so that 'you might labour with me in vigils and prayers'.¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, you also remain 'here', so that each one may remain in the rank of his calling because every grace (even though it may be great) also has a superior one. And what it means when he says, Remain 'here' is clear from the fact that in the following lines it is said, 'But he went forward a little and fell on his face'.¹⁹⁵ For this reason let us remain where Jesus ordered, in accordance with the apostle's command, 'Let each one remain with God in the vocation in which he was called', so that we may do all things that we may be vigilant equally with him who 'neither slumbers nor sleeps guarding Israel'.¹⁹⁶ But he has led them to this place, especially Peter who has great confidence in himself, so that they can see and hear where human capability lies and how it is obtained; that they may see him falling 'on his face', and hear him saying, 'Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me',¹⁹⁷ and learn not to be proud about themselves but to think lowly of themselves, and not to be quick to promise, but passionate to pray. Therefore, he took those who appeared to be more reliable and courageous, like Peter, in whom likewise boasting could more easily find a place because of their confidence in their faith. The inferior, however, (I mean so far as the danger of boasting is concerned) were fortified by the very insufficiency of their faith.

92 'And going forward a little he fell on his face praying and saying, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me'.¹⁹⁸

He who humbling himself in a commendable manner said, 'Learn from me, because I am meek and humble in heart', and he who now falls 'on his face

¹⁸⁸ Heb 4:15; 2:13, 14.

¹⁸⁹ Eph 6:12; see Ps 2:2.

¹⁹⁰ Mk 14:33.

¹⁹¹ See Rom 6:10.

¹⁹² Mt 26:38.

¹⁹³ See 1 Cor 3:2.

¹⁹⁴ See Rom 15:30.

¹⁹⁵ Mt 26:39.

¹⁹⁶ 1 Cor 7:20; Ps 120:4.

¹⁹⁷ Mt 26:39.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

praying, also humbles himself to a greater extent a little later 'becoming obedient unto death' because the price of exaltation is humility, for if he had not humbled himself because of God he would not have been exalted by God.¹⁹⁹ And he falls 'on his face' 'when he has gone forward' not far, but a 'little' from the three disciples who are remaining with him; for he did not want to be far from them but to pray while he is near them. And he who says, 'praying: If it is possible let this cup pass from me', shows his devotion in his prayer, as 'a beloved son'²⁰⁰ and, pleasing the arrangement of his Father, he adds, 'but not as I will, but as you will'. He is teaching that we should not pray that our will come about, but God's, since it might be that we want something other than God. 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; but not as I will, but as you will'. 'He began' to be afraid and 'to be distressed'²⁰¹ insofar as he prays that the cup of suffering pass from him, 'but not as' he himself wishes, 'but as' the Father wishes. For when he took up the nature of human flesh he fulfilled all its qualities so that he not be thought to have had flesh as an apparition, but in truth. Accordingly, in this passage he prays that the cup of suffering pass from him, 'but not as' he himself wills, 'but as' the Father wills, since it is appropriate that every faithful person not want to suffer any grief, especially something that leads to death,²⁰² because he is a man of flesh, but if God shall have willed it so, to acquiesce even against his own will because he is faithful, so that he not appear to despair more in himself than he hopes in God. For just as we ought not display too much confidence lest we appear to assert our own power, so we ought not act too timidly and despair, so that we not appear to proclaim that God our helper is powerless. This will, therefore, that he mentions, 'If it is possible, let this cup pass from me, but not as I will, but as you will', is not related to his divine, impassable substance, but to his weak, human nature.

But there is another interpretation of this passage that goes as follows. In his foreknowledge as the 'beloved Son' of God, he loved those who were to believe from the Gentiles, but he loved the Jews as the seed of the holy fathers, as the branches of the true olive 'to whom belonged the adoption, the glory, the covenant, and the promises.'²⁰³ And loving them, he saw what sort of things they were to suffer when they seek to put him to death and choose to save Barabbas' life. Therefore, he said, out of grief for them, 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me'; again, withdrawing his own desire and seeing the great benefit his suffering would bring about for the entire world, he said, 'But not as I will, but as you will'. In addition, because of that cup of suffering, he also saw that Judas who was one of the twelve would be a son of perdition; furthermore, in that cup of suffering he understood the principalities and powers that were to triumph in his body.²⁰⁴ It was because of these, therefore, whom he did not wish to perish in his suffering, that he said, 'Father if it is possible, let this cup

¹⁹⁹ See Phil 2:8; Mt 23:12.²⁰⁰ See Mt 3:17.²⁰¹ See Mt 26:37; Mk 14:34.²⁰² See Phil 2:8.²⁰³ See Col 1:13; Rom 9:4; 11:17.²⁰⁴ See 2 Thess 2:3; Col 2:15.

pass from me, but for the sake of the salvation of the whole human race which was to be accomplished by his death to God, he said, as if reconsidering, 'But not as I will, but as you will'. That means 'if it is possible' that all those good things that are to come about by my suffering come about without my suffering, 'let' this suffering 'pass from me', that the world might be saved and the Jews not perish in my suffering. But if salvation cannot be introduced without the destruction of indefinite multitudes, so far as concerns your justice, may it 'not' pass by 'as I will, but as you will'. It is as if he should say: That is my will, but since your will is much more eminent (as the will of the unbegotten God, the Father of all things), on that account I wish your will to come about rather than mine.

Scripture mentions this cup of suffering that is drunk in many places, especially that cup which is personally drunk by the martyrs, as it is there: 'What shall I give back to the Lord for all that he has given to me? I will take the cup of salvation and I will call on the name of the Lord.'²⁰⁵ If, then, the cup of salvation is a cup of martyrdom, we must preserve that cup so that we spill nothing from it, drinking it entire for it is the cup of salvation. He who suffers for testimony, therefore, drinks the whole cup whatever may have been inflicted on him; but he who has been called to martyrdom and denies lest he suffer anything takes the cup and pours it out. The 'cup of intoxication', which one drinks after he has eaten a 'meal' prepared for him by God 'opposite those who afflict' the just, is of another kind.²⁰⁶

Now it is to be noted that Mark and Luke, who also related Jesus' temptation by the devil, record this same thing. John, however, relates the passion indeed, as the others, but he does not introduce Jesus praying that the cup might pass from him,²⁰⁷ just as he does not relate Jesus' temptation by the devil. I think the reason for this is that Mark and Luke set forth more about him in relation to his human nature than his divine, and John more in relation to his divine nature than his human (because he was tempted in relation to his human nature, but the divinity was incapable of temptation). The three evangelists, therefore, relate the temptation, but John, in keeping with how he began, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God',²⁰⁸ does not recognize that God the Word can be tempted. So also here, these three have related that Jesus asked from the Father that the 'cup' might pass from him, since it was also the characteristic of a human (so far as it relates to the weakness of the flesh) to wish to avoid suffering. John, however, intending to set forth Jesus as God the Word who knows that he himself is 'the life and the resurrection', does not recognize that the impassable God shrinks back from suffering.

²⁰⁵ Ps 115:3-4. ²⁰⁶ See Ps 22(23):5.

²⁰⁷ See Mk 14:32-42; Lk 39-46; Jn 18:1-9.

²⁰⁸ Jn 1:1.

93 'And he comes to his disciples and finds them sleeping, and he says to Peter: Were you thus not able to watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, so that you not enter into temptation.'²⁰⁹

As long as Jesus was present with his disciples they did not sleep, but when he went forward a little from them they could not 'watch one hour' in his absence. For this reason let us pray that Jesus should never go a little ahead of us, but that he might fulfil in us what he promised when he said, 'Behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age'.²¹⁰ For so we will watch when he drives sleep from our souls, without whom it is not possible to fulfil the command that says: 'Do not give sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids, that you may escape like a deer from the nets, and a bird from a trap'.²¹¹ Nevertheless, when he comes 'to the disciples' and finds them 'sleeping' he awakens them with a word to be heeded, so that he might say what he says to those listening, 'Were you thus not able to watch with me one hour'. Now he commands to watch, so that watching we may pray. He who does good works watches; he watches who acts carefully from the truth of faith that he not encounter some dark doctrine. For the prayer of the person who prays watching in this way is heard, for this is what he means when he says, 'Watch and pray', that we should first watch, and thus watching, pray. 'That you not enter into temptation. As many understand this, it is as if he should say, That you not be tempted; but if it should thus please God, rest in God, as you hear me praying. But consider if it is possible to understand it rather in this way: that our life itself 'is a temptation' according to Job; but to enter 'into temptation' or to come 'into temptation' is to fall 'in temptation' and be overcome by it.²¹² I think that no one comes to Jesus who is at the same time 'in temptation'; but if one comes to Jesus, he does not come 'in temptation', and if he comes 'in temptation' he does not come to Jesus. For no one comes to Jesus except the one whom the Father draws to Jesus that he might raise him up.²¹³ We come to Jesus, therefore, so that even if the tempter and his evils shall pursue us, they may not overtake us, just as it is written, 'Evils will pursue you and not overtake you'.²¹⁴ And consequently it is said to sinners, 'Evils will pursue you and overtake you'.²¹⁵

94 'The spirit indeed is eager, but the flesh is weak'.²¹⁶

Just as your 'spirit', Peter, was 'eager' to promise, but your 'flesh' will be 'weak' to confess. But it must be considered whether just as the 'flesh' of all people is 'weak', so the 'spirit' of all is 'eager', or indeed, the 'flesh' of all people is 'weak', but the 'spirit' of all people is not 'eager', but only that of the saints. Therefore, he says to the apostles alone or to those who are found to be like them that 'the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak'; the 'spirit' of the unbelieving, on the other hand, is sluggish and 'the flesh is weak'. If, then, it turns out that Christ says this

²⁰⁹ Mt 26:40, 41.

²¹⁰ Mt 28:20.

²¹¹ Prov 6:4-5.

²¹² Job 7:1.

²¹³ See Jn 6:44.

²¹⁴ Prov 13:21.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Mt 26:41.

only to the saints, since at other times also the 'flesh is weak', we must ask if it is, nevertheless, of those alone whose 'spirit is eager'. I say that the flesh of that person is weak who does not sin or possess a strong, carnal wisdom,²¹⁷ but a feeble one, and who puts to death 'the works of the flesh' with an eager spirit and has reduced his carnal wisdom to nothing, so that he might 'always' bear about 'the death of Christ in his body'.²¹⁸ The spirit, of course, prevails in its desires against the desires of the flesh, since 'the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh'. 'These things', indeed, in the imperfect 'are contrary to one another',²¹⁹ but in the perfect the flesh is no longer contrary but has been put to death and carnal wisdom is weak in the flesh and its lust has been extinguished; the wisdom of the spirit lives in them; it is alive and operative.²²⁰ It is about this weakness that the Lord also says to the apostle, 'Power is made perfect in weakness'; that is, in the weakness of the flesh and its wisdom.²²¹ For this reason the apostle says, 'For when I am weak, then I am strong'; for each of us becomes strong when his flesh shall have been made weak, so that he does not perform 'the works of the flesh', but the power of Christ inhabits it.²²² Whence he said, 'I fight with certainty', and 'I chastise my body and bring it to subjection', because by many chastisements a man makes his flesh weak, advances in the spirit, and puts to death 'the works of the flesh'.²²³ He wishes to say this, therefore, to his disciples in this tradition: 'Watch and pray, so that you', whose 'spirit indeed is eager, but whose flesh is weak' 'may not enter into temptation',²²⁴ since he who is more spiritual and perfect needs to be more careful lest his great good contain a serious fall.

95 'Again Jesus goes and prays saying, My Father, if it is not possible that this pass from me unless I drink it, may your will be done'.²²⁵

He asks now that the cup might pass from him, and if not thus as he himself wished, that it might pass as the Father wished. Let us now set forth here what we can understand, that we may also be seen to have set forth the preceding things with this. For I think that that cup of suffering was going to pass completely from Jesus but with a difference, so that, if he should indeed drink it, it would also pass from himself, and afterwards also from the whole human race; but if he should not drink it, it would perhaps pass from himself, but it would not pass from human beings, but would remain with them until he perfect them. He wished, therefore, in the first instance, that this cup of suffering would pass from him in such a way that he not taste its bitterness at all if this should be possible so far as the justice of God was concerned. For his words, 'if it is possible', did not refer to the power of God alone, but also to his justice since all things are possible, whether just or unjust, so far as the power of God is concerned, but so far as the justice of him who is not only powerful but also just, all things are

²¹⁷ See 2 Cor 1:12.

²¹⁸ See Rom 8:13; 2 Cor 4:10.

²¹⁹ Gal 5:17.

²²⁰ See Col 1:9.

²²¹ 2 Cor 12:9.

²²² 2 Cor 12:9-10.

²²³ 1 Cor 9:26, 27.

²²⁴ Mt 26:41.

²²⁵ Mt 26:42.

not possible, but only those things that are just. But if it were not possible, he preferred to drink it, and in this way, it would pass from him and the whole human race, rather than act contrary to the will of the Father by avoiding drinking it. Because of the good result which was to follow, after the bitterness of the cup had been drunk, he prays in turn a second time saying, 'My Father, if it is not possible that it not pass unless I shall drink it, may your will be done'.

It is clear, therefore, that he was willing to drink it. For how much better it was in comparison, that it pass because he drank it, than that it not pass because he had not drunk it. For suppose the Lord had not drunk that cup and, for this reason, it had not passed. Doubtless the spirits that cause sins would not have passed from humanity, and consequently neither would the punishments owed sins have passed. It was expedient for all, therefore, that the cup pass from the Saviour because he drank it, so that all we who believe in him who drank it should not drink that cup 'of unmixed wine'. He who drinks it and will drink it is 'all the nations', so that drinking it 'they get drunk, vomit, and desist being senseless'.²²⁶ For just as 'he died for us all', so that the injurious death of Christ might pass us, so he drank that cup for us all (who, as 'debtors', deserved to drink it forever) so that by the fact that the cup passes from him, it might pass also from us who do not drink it. Jeremiah says of this cup, 'The Lord God of Israel said to me: Take the cup of this unmixed wine from my hand, and give it to all the nations to drink to whom I send you, and they will drink, vomit, and desist from being senseless before the sword which I am sending into their midst'.²²⁷ Those who listen to the Lord, therefore, and live according to his word and have been cleansed by his faithfulness have no need now for that cleansing that comes about through that cup of wrath. For just as those who have been washed have no need to be washed because they are clean²²⁸ (because they are Christ's disciples), so those who are not clean have need of that cup when the Lord exhorts them, 'Drink, get drunk, and vomit'.²²⁹ For listen to how Jeremiah speaks (or rather God in Jeremiah) exhorting those who need such a cup, that those who need such cleansing ought to drink it voluntarily. And seeing that God exhorts and says it is to be drunk, notice what he says further down: 'And it shall be' he says, 'when they are not willing to take the cup from your hand to be drunk, you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord of the powers: You shall certainly drink it, for I am beginning to bring evil on this very city on which my name is invoked, and you shall certainly be cleansed".'²³⁰

Notice that after the first prayer 'he comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping', and likewise after the second, 'he comes and finds them sleeping because their eyes were heavy'.²³¹ I think it was not so much the eyes of their bodies as the eyes of their souls, for he had not yet removed the weight placed

²²⁶ Jer 32:1-2.

²³⁰ Jer 32:14-15.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²³¹ Mt 26:40, 43.

²²⁸ See Jn 13:10.

²²⁹ Jer 32:13.

on the eyes of his disciples, 'for he had not yet been honoured'. And just as 'the Holy Spirit was not yet because Jesus had not yet been honoured', so their eyes had not yet been uncovered from the weight 'because Jesus had not yet been honoured'.²³² For this reason he did not rebuke them, but 'going again a third time he prayed, in turn, the same thing', teaching us by this word 'same', that we ought not cease in prayer, but continue with the same word of prayer until we obtain those things we previously began to request.

96 'Then coming he said to his disciples, Sleep now and rest; behold the hour has come near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us go; behold he who betrays me has drawn near.'²³³

'Then' means without doubt after the third prayer. But it is not that same sleep which is written twice previously to have seized the disciples that he now orders his disciples to sleep. For there 'he finds them sleeping', not also resting, and 'again he finds them sleeping' having heavy eyes, but now he commands them not simply to sleep, but to sleep with rest. For there is a big difference in relation to the command of Christ to sleep and to rest from sleep contrary to the will of the same one who says, 'Remain here and watch with me', and who reproaches them because of sleep saying, 'Are you not thus able to watch with me one hour'.²³⁴ He did not, therefore, contradict himself when he said there, 'Watch with me', and here, 'Sleep and rest'. It was that order might be preserved: first, indeed, we should watch, praying that we not enter temptation, and later we may sleep and rest in accordance with the command of Christ.

Solomon also placed this sleep in a promise to those who live rightly, saying in his Proverbs, 'For if you sit you will be without fear; and if you sleep you will sleep pleasantly, and you will not fear the terror when it comes upon you or the attacks of the impious when they invade'.²³⁵ And David, aware of various vigils and sleeps, 'swore to the Lord and vowed a vow to the God of Jacob', not to go up to a bed of his spreading nor to give sleep to his eyes or rest to his eyelids, and not to do this until he find a 'place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob',²³⁶ so that when he shall have found a place for the Lord he might go up to a bed of his spreading and give sleep to his eyes renewing himself and preparing, after his rest, for a new and more divine resurrection, in the likeness of what human bodies are accustomed to awaken to after a sound, natural sleep. But perhaps also, since a soul is not able to endure labours continuously, as being created and made flesh and not sufficient to serve the good uninterruptedly, it attains times of relaxation without any blame, which are referred to in the moral sense as sleep and rest, so that when it has had a short time of relaxation it arises renewed and refreshed. But if this will always be the case or not, let the person investigate more thoroughly who can investigate and understand such things from the divine Scriptures and give a report without risk.

²³² Jn 7:39.

²³³ Mt 26:45-6.

²³⁴ Mt 26:38, 40.

²³⁵ Prov 3:24-5.

²³⁶ See Ps 131:2-5.

97 'Behold the hour has come near and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'²³⁷

I think it was because of this hour that he also said to his mother, "My hour has not yet come."²³⁸ For he also teaches here that he was doing this because the hour was approaching that 'the Son of Man' should be betrayed 'into the hands of sinners.' Oh, that it was only in the hands of those sinners at that time that Jesus was betrayed! But now I think Jesus is always being betrayed 'into the hands of sinners' when these who appear to believe in Jesus have Jesus in their hands when they are sinners. But also, every time a just person who has Jesus in himself²³⁹ shall have acted in the power of sinners who do to him what they can, Jesus has been delivered 'into the hands of sinners'.

98 'Arise, let us go; behold he who betrays me has drawn near.'²⁴⁰

After he roused them from that sleep that we mentioned, he says subsequently to his disciples, 'Arise, Let us go.' And, in his spirit seeing Judas approaching to betray him, who was not yet seen by his disciples, he says, 'Behold he who betrays me has drawn near.' But I do not think 'Behold he has drawn near' me, and 'Behold he who betrays me has drawn near' is the same thing. For Jesus' traitor (who had removed himself from Jesus by his sins and treachery²⁴¹ in which he had taken counsel to betray him²⁴²) was not drawing near Jesus himself, but 'he drew near' to betray the Son of God whom he had already treacherously surrendered. But all transgressors also first treacherously surrender Jesus, then betray him.

99 'And while he was still speaking, behold Judas, one of the twelve, comes, and with him a large crowd with swords and clubs sent by the high priests and elders of the people.'²⁴³

But someone will seek the reason 'a large crowd' will have gathered 'with swords and clubs' against him; and according to John this large crowd was a cohort of soldiers and servants sent by the chief priests.²⁴⁴ One can answer that it was because there was a multitude of people who already believed in him that so many came against him, fearing lest a large multitude of believers snatch him from their hands. I, however, think there is also another reason for the gathering of a multitude against him. Those who thought he usually cast out demons in the name of Beelzebub²⁴⁵ thought that by some vicious, magical knowledge he could flee from the midst of those wishing to arrest him. And perhaps some of them had heard how once when he was to be cast down from the brow of a hill he escaped the hands of those holding him, not by means of a simple, human escape, but by some other escape beyond human nature.²⁴⁶ Indeed this is also why in Mark Judas said to the crowd accompanying him 'with swords and clubs', 'Whomever I shall kiss is the one; seize him and lead

²³⁷ Mt 26:45.

²³⁸ Jn 2:4.

²³⁹ See Gal 2:20.

²⁴⁰ Mt 26:46.

²⁴¹ See Ps 72:27.

²⁴² See Mt 26:14-16.

²⁴³ Mt 26:47.

²⁴⁴ See Jn 18:3.

²⁴⁵ See Mt 12:24.

²⁴⁶ See Lk 4:29-30.

him off with care.'²⁴⁷ For when he says, 'Lead him off with care' he seems to have spoken wickedly and with the implication that if you do not hold him carefully and lead him off, he will escape you when he wishes. And those who listen to the opinion of Judas, as if he might do this or many other things without the aid of his Father's divinity, did everything that they might hold and guard him diligently.

There are many even now like those waging war in a similar way against Jesus 'with' the spiritual 'swords and clubs' of evil spirits.²⁴⁸ Jesus is entirely superior to their insidious devices, although for the time he may incur their attacks against him that the sins of those plotting against him might be filled up²⁴⁹ and the ill-will and the malice of their will against the truth of the only-begotten Word of God might become clear.²⁵⁰ And those who thus wage war against Jesus 'with swords and clubs' come with differing teachings about God and intentionally lie in ambush for Jesus. And also, those who have been sent by the impious elders of their own people wage war against the word of truth which is in Jesus.²⁵¹

100 'And he who betrayed him gave them a sign saying, Whomever I shall kiss is the one. Hold him fast. And immediately approaching Jesus he said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. But Jesus said to him, Friend, why have you come?'²⁵²

It is worth inquiring why Judas 'gave a sign' to those sent by the chief priests saying, 'Whomever I shall kiss is the one' as if they didn't know his physical form, since Jesus had taught openly in several cities and villages and synagogues preaching the word of the Gospel (so that his fame went out 'in every region'²⁵³) and his face was known by all the inhabitants of Judaea. And that they too who came with Judas to arrest him had frequently seen him is clear from what Jesus himself says to the crowds: 'Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me as if I were a robber? I sat with you daily in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.'²⁵⁴ John also relates that he said in a similar manner: 'I have spoken openly to this world; I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple where all Jews gather.'²⁵⁵

But we have received the following tradition about him. Not only were there two forms in him (one as all saw him, and another as he was transfigured before his disciples on the mountain when 'his face shone like the sun'²⁵⁶), but he also appeared to each one as that person had been worthy. And although he himself had existed, it was as if he himself was not seen by all, in accordance with what has been written about the manna, when God 'sent bread from heaven' to the children of Israel, 'which contained every delight and adapted to every taste', when it was changed to what one wished, gratifying the desire of

²⁴⁷ Mk 14:43, 44.

²⁴⁸ See Eph 6:12-17.

²⁴⁹ See Gn 15:16.

²⁵⁰ See Eph 1:13; Jn 1:18.

²⁵¹ See Eph 1:13.

²⁵² Mt 26:48-50.

²⁵³ See Mt 9:26.

²⁵⁴ Mt 26:55.

²⁵⁵ Jn 18:20.

²⁵⁶ Mt 17:2.

the one offering.²⁵⁷ This tradition does not seem incredible to me, either physically in connection with Jesus himself, since he appeared in one way or another to people, or in connection with the nature of the Word, which does not appear to all in the same way. And if this is the case, it is possible to discover the answer to our question. For even if the crowds that come with Judas have frequently seen Jesus, they, nonetheless, needed someone who would point him out to them (because of his transformations) who had more intimate knowledge of him gained from spending a lot of time with him so that he would have knowledge of the transformations by which Jesus usually appeared to his own. The evangelist John also indicates this same thing, where 'Jesus knowing what things will come upon him, went forth and said, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said to them, I am he' and 'they went back and fell backwards.'²⁵⁸ You see that they did not recognize him because of his transfigurations, although they had often seen him.

But if someone should also ask why Judas betrayed Jesus 'with a kiss,' we will offer the reason that, as some think, he wished to maintain some reverence for the teacher, not daring openly to rush at him and shamelessly acknowledge himself as the betrayer of the teacher, and himself occasion his evasion since he would be able (so far as his own opinion was concerned) by means of some more secret teachings to escape and make himself small. Therefore, in order that Jesus suspect nothing of the sort (as Judas supposed) but thinking him to be his friend (how he did not know) and thus unthreatened, he might be seized, he, therefore, 'gave' this 'sign,' unaware at the time that if Jesus had not wished to be seized, he would never have been seized, but he willingly offered himself to the hands of sinners.

Now I think that all betrayers of the truth pretend to love the truth, and use the sign of a kiss as some kind of indication of love, to betray the Word of God to his adversaries who want to seize him. They come clothed with nothing to make peace, but have swords of war and violence, and clubs.²⁵⁹ And the betrayer says to Jesus, 'Rabbi'; for all heretics, like Judas, speak to Jesus in this way: 'Rabbi,' and they also kiss him as Judas did. And Jesus says to them all in an appeasing manner, since they are all the traitor Judas, 'Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?''²⁶⁰ But he says to him in reproach of his feigned friendship, 'Friend, why have you come?' For we are aware of no one good addressed in this way in the Scriptures. For he says to an evil man not clothed in wedding garments, 'Friend, how did you come here not having a wedding garment?''²⁶¹ And it is an evil man also who heard, in the parable of the denarius, 'Friend, I have done you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go; but I wish also to give to this last as also to you.'²⁶²

²⁵⁷ See Wis 16:20, 21.

²⁵⁸ Jn 18:4-6.

²⁵⁹ See Mt 26:47.

²⁶⁰ Lk 22:48.

²⁶¹ Mt 22:12.

²⁶² Mt 20:13-14. Greek fragment: We know no good person addressed by this term; for the man without a wedding garment was also addressed in this way, 'Friend, how did you enter here';

101 'Then they approached and laid hands on Jesus and held him'.²⁶³

Immediately after the kiss that crowd, perhaps fearing that Jesus might escape from their hands, 'laid hands on him' without delay. And behold, one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, and striking a servant of the high priest, cut off his ear'.²⁶⁴ And 'one' of those 'who were with Jesus', not yet clearly comprehending that Gospel patience Christ had delivered to them, or the peace that he gave to his disciples,²⁶⁵ but in keeping with the right given to the Jews by the law about enemies,²⁶⁶ 'stretching out his hand' takes his 'sword and' strikes 'a servant of the high priests' and 'cuts off his ear'. But as John says, 'And he cut off his right ear'.²⁶⁷ John also mentions that the name of the servant was 'Malchus'. Now perhaps what Peter did was the mystery that the right sense of hearing of the Jewish people was to be cut off because of the evil they displayed against Jesus. For even if they appear to hear the law, they now, with the left sense of hearing, hear a shadow of the tradition of the law, not the truth, since they are servants of the word that professes service of God but that is not serving it in truth. It was the mystery of this word against Christ *** Caiaphas, the chief priest and adversary of Christ.²⁶⁸ Now it seems to me that all the Gentiles who have believed constitute one people in Christ and by the fact that they have believed in Christ they have become the reason that the right sense of hearing of the Jews was cut off in relation to the prophecy about them: 'Weigh down the ears of this people, and depress their eyes, so that when they see they may not see and when they hear they may not understand and turn back and I heal them'.²⁶⁹

102 'Then Jesus said to him, Put your sword back in its place'.²⁷⁰

Thereupon Jesus does not say to him who had used his sword and cut off the right 'ear' of that servant, Get rid of the sword, but 'Put the sword back in its place'. There is, therefore, some place for the sword, from which he who is not willing to perish by the sword is not permitted to take it. For Jesus wants his disciples to be peacemakers²⁷¹ that they might put away this 'sword' of war and take up the other peacemaking 'sword' that Scripture calls 'the sword of the Spirit'.²⁷² And the following statement seems to me to be similar: 'All who take the sword will also perish by the sword',²⁷³ that is, all who are not peacemakers but are agitators of war will perish in that war that they stir up, so that the sword against them is the mystery of war and strife. And I think that all who

and it was said to the grumbling worker, 'Friend, I am not wronging you.' The word for 'friend' in the Greek text of the three passages Origen has referred to is not the common word for friend in the New Testament (*philos*), but the word *hetairos* which appears in addresses only in the three passages Origen mentions. It is used in a few late MSS and also in Mt 11:16 where Jesus compares that generation to children reproaching their 'friends' for not dancing when they piped or mourning when they wailed.

²⁶³ Mt 26:50.

²⁶⁴ Mt 26:51.

²⁶⁵ See Jn 14:27.

²⁶⁶ See Dt 7:2.

²⁶⁷ Jn 8:10. Klostermann thinks the beginning of Jn 8:10 has fallen out here.

²⁶⁸ Klostermann posits a lacuna and refers to Mt 26:57.

²⁶⁹ Is 6:10.

²⁷⁰ Mt 26:52.

²⁷¹ See Mt 5:9.

²⁷² Eph 6:17.

²⁷³ Mt 26:52.

are tumultuous and agitators of war and disturbers of human souls, especially of the churches, take the sword by which they themselves will also perish since 'he who digs a hole falls into it himself', since their 'pain is turned back on' their own 'head', and their 'iniquity will descend on' their own 'skull'.²⁷⁴ But even hearing what he says in a simple way, 'They who take the sword will perish by the sword', summons us to beware that we not take out a 'sword' on the occasion of warfare or vengeance for our own injuries or for any other reason all of which this Gospel teaching of Christ abhors, commanding us to fulfil the Scripture, 'I was a peacemaker with these who hate peace'.²⁷⁵ If, therefore, we ought to be peacemakers with those who hate peace, we ought not use the sword against anyone.

Wishing thus (speaking to the person who has not learned it) to teach us all that 'he' willingly 'delivered himself for us all',²⁷⁶ he adds, 'Or do you think that I could not ask my Father right now, and he will present me with more than twelve legions of angels?'²⁷⁷ It is as if he said, You have drawn a sword and struck a servant of the priest as if offering me help in this way, but if I had wished, I could have asked my Father, not for the help of humans, but of better beings, that is 'of angels', and not of one, but of 'more than twelve legions'. This shows that there are legions of angels of a heavenly army, similar to the legions of an army of this world, that wage war against the legions of demons who inhabit tombs,²⁷⁸ for in Luke too 'a multitude of the heavenly army' is heard 'praising God' because of the birth of Christ.²⁷⁹ But if 'a multitude of the heavenly army was praising God', and the whole army is understood as drawn up near the adversaries, consequently that army near the adversaries wages war for God. But Jacob too called some place 'the camp' of the Lord, because he saw an army of angels there.²⁸⁰ Wherever there are those who fear God, there are camps of angels around them, for 'an angel of the Lord will send help around those who fear him, and will deliver them',²⁸¹ just as the book of Kings relates was around Elisha.²⁸²

And take note: Do you think that the Saviour, as if inferior to the angels or in need of help from the angels, said, 'Or do you think that I am not able to ask my Father and he will provide me with more than twelve legions of angels?'²⁸³ — or did he, perhaps, speak these words in relation to Peter's viewpoint, who wanted to help him and drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant?²⁸⁴ For the angels have more need of help from the only-begotten Son²⁸⁵ of God than he from them. For this reason also, the words, 'Because he will command his angels concerning you, that they may guard you in all your ways',²⁸⁶ are not

²⁷⁴ Eccles 10:8; Ps 7:17.

²⁷⁵ Ps 119:7.

²⁷⁶ Eph 5:2. Greek fragment: And he said these things that they not think that he suffered unwillingly.

²⁷⁷ Mt 26:53.

²⁷⁸ See Mt 8:28.

²⁷⁹ See Lk 2:13.

²⁸⁰ See Gn 32:2.

²⁸¹ Ps 33:8.

²⁸² See 4 (2) Kgs 6:17.

²⁸³ Mt 26:53.

²⁸⁴ See Jn 18:10.

²⁸⁵ See Jn 1:18.

²⁸⁶ Ps 90:11.

understood to have been said of the only-begotten Son of God, but to have been said either in the person of Christ about every just person whom Christ carried in his body, or about Christ in his human nature. For also the statement, 'He will free you 'from falling and from a noon-time demon', is by no means fitting for the Son of God. And in the same way, the words, 'You shall not fear terror at night, an arrow that flies in the day, a trouble that wanders about in the night',²⁸⁷ are more appropriate for a just person than for the Son of God. Although, therefore, he could get legions, he did not want to do so in order that the Scriptures that prophesy of him that it was fitting for him to suffer in this way might be fulfilled by his submission.

103 'In that hour Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out with swords and clubs, as against a robber, to arrest me? I used to sit daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me'.²⁸⁸

The intention of those things that are said in this passage seems to me to be in the nature of what the Saviour says to the crowds: If someone wishes to seize a 'robber' it is not incongruous to approach him 'with swords and clubs' because a robber is the kind of person who would risk all things to avoid suffering anything bad, and if he has the capability, he is prepared to use both a sword and a club against those wishing to arrest him rather than voluntarily deliver himself into their hands. All who are in Judaea know, however, that I am not such a person. Some have seen my teaching and my works and others, having heard of me, follow my manner of life, because I was a public figure sitting 'daily' in the holy place of the temple, because I am in agreement with the divine teachings which have reference to piety and a sound life in accordance with the law of God. In this way, I showed myself to be a peaceful person. And that neither your treachery against me nor your war made 'with swords and clubs' has any sensible rationale at all is clear to all who know me. And how were you not appeased when you saw me persisting 'daily' 'in the temple of God' and offering myself to all who wished to hear me, that by my word and life I might unite them to myself for their benefit and for the blessedness of God? Or did you not 'seize me' then because you did not see me teaching and doing anything deserving accusation, but now as if you think I have changed, you think I need to be arrested as a 'robber'? But you will not find any occasion at this time, as if there has been some change in my teaching from those things which I set forth especially for those wishing to do good in their words and deeds.

And notice, after he said to Peter, 'Put your sword away in its sheath'²⁸⁹ (which statement indicates patience), after he restored the ear that had been cut off, as another evangelist says²⁹⁰ (which was, at the same time, indicative of the greatest kindness and divine power), he then spoke those words so that, even if his

²⁸⁷ Ps 90:5, 6.

²⁸⁸ Mt 26:55.

²⁸⁹ Jn 18:11.

²⁹⁰ See Lk 22:51.

previous good deeds are not remembered, or the present ones recognized, these might be seen as trustworthy apart from his preceding words and deeds.

104 'And all this was done that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.'²⁹¹

And of such ***²⁹² there is much now to select from the prophets, such as what sort of utterances 'of the prophets' they are which were fulfilled at that time, when Christ said he suffered these things. It takes a studious and well-versed person to gather the words 'of the prophets' that have been fulfilled. In the one hundred eighteenth Psalm, you will perhaps discover many statements appropriate to those who came with Judas to arrest Jesus, as you will also find other words spoken of Judas in the same Psalm.

'Then they all left him at the same time and fled.'²⁹³ 'They fled' in fear of the crowds and of Judas, their leader, for 'since Jesus had not yet been honoured' they did not yet have the Spirit, namely the 'Spirit' 'of power and love'. They would not have been weak or done anything contrary to the divine love²⁹⁴ if they had had the Spirit.

105 'But those holding Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were gathered.'²⁹⁵

I think that Caiaphas is the cause of the Jewish subjection in which they now are openly acknowledged to serve. He is said to be the high priest and he wages war against Jesus, the truth, who is a priest in truth, the Word of God, under whom all who serve God the Father in an acceptable way have been constituted. But where Caiaphas is high priest, there the 'scribes' are gathered, that is the learned who preside over the letter that kills. And alongside the nature of the scribes are also the 'elders' who rest not on the truth but on the antiquity of the simple letter and wish to deal with nothing more.

106 'But Peter followed him from a distance to the atrium of the high priest, and went in and sat with the servants that he might see the conclusion of the matter.'²⁹⁶

When the teacher was led off, Peter indeed 'followed', but he was not able to follow him closely but from afar. He neither withdrew from him all together, nor walked with him or beside him, but following 'at a distance' he arrived at 'the atrium of the high priest'. And Peter 'went in and sat down', neither serving in conformity with that servant, nor doing what Jesus had taught, but waiting, wishing to see 'the conclusion' of all these things, because he still did not understand or see 'the conclusion' to which the ministrations of Christ were moving. For their conclusion is not in the atrium of Caiaphas, nor where 'the scribes and elders' of that people are gathered. But should someone see 'the conclusion accurately, he will see the very Word of God and Wisdom saying, 'I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.'²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ Mt 26:56.

²⁹² Klostermann indicates a gap in the text here.

²⁹³ Mt 26:56.

²⁹⁴ See Jn 7:39; 2 Tim 1:7.

²⁹⁵ Mt 26:57.

²⁹⁶ Mt 26:58.

²⁹⁷ Rev 21:6.

107 'And the chief priests and elders and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might deliver him to death, and they did not find it; and many false witnesses approached, and they did not find it.'²⁹⁸

This makes clear that Jesus 'did not commit sin, nor was there deceit in his mouth.'²⁹⁹ By this it is demonstrated that his life was completely pure and irreproachable, removing opportunities from those who seek opportunities, because his adversaries 'did not find' what they could say against him or tinge him with (but all 'the priests and the whole council were seeking' and could find nothing resembling the truth). False testimonies had a place at that time when they might be put forth with some tinge, but no tinge was found against Jesus that could aid their lies against him—and this happened even though there were 'many' wanting to do a favour for Caiaphas and the chief priest and scribes and elders and the whole council who were desiring to hear this very thing. And those who give careful attention to these things confer highest praise on Jesus because of his life and teaching. He was so free from reproach in everything he said and did that neither the wicked, nor the multitudes, or the very shrewd and clever found anything in him reprehensible that resembled the truth.

108 'And finally two false witnesses approached and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it after three days.'³⁰⁰

Do not think that Matthew called these two witnesses false for no reason, although their testimony may appear to be true because John relates that Christ said, 'Destroy this temple, and I will rebuild it in three days,' when it is also added, 'But he said this of the temple of his body.'³⁰¹ But notice the craftiness of the two false witnesses. They use an opinion taken from some true saying that Jesus uttered, and fashion a false testimony. For Jesus did not say, I will destroy this temple and in three days raise it up, but, 'Destroy ***³⁰² this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The false witnesses, however, report that he said what he had not said. Nor did he say: 'I am able' to destroy 'the temple of God and' in three days 'rebuild it'. He himself, therefore, did not promise to commit the impiety of destroying the temple, but connected that with those apt for a work of this kind, saying, 'Destroy this temple', and what he reserves for himself is this: 'And I will raise it up in three days.'³⁰³ The Jews, shackled with wickedness, heard what he said incorrectly, because 'he spoke of the temple of his body.'³⁰⁴ They, however, understood it of that temple made of stone, which is clear from their response, 'This temple was built in forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?'³⁰⁵ And take note that it was not

²⁹⁸ Mt 26:59, 60.

²⁹⁹ Is 63:9.

³⁰⁰ Mt 26:60, 61.

³⁰¹ Jn 2:19, 21.

³⁰² Diehl posited a gap here. Greek fragment: And these two agreed and spoke falsely, for the Lord did not say, 'I will destroy the temple', but 'Destroy', and he did not say, 'Destroy the temple of God', but 'Destroy this temple' speaking of his own body, but the Jews welcomed this saying which was false.

³⁰³ Jn 2:19.

³⁰⁴ Jn 2:21.

³⁰⁵ Jn 2:20.

one false witness that came forward with this testimony (for one was not sufficient for those wishing to kill Jesus, because the law prescribed: 'One witness shall not abide to give testimony against a man'³⁰⁶), but neither were there three, for 'although many false witnesses came forward', scarcely were 'two' found who appeared to have anything to say.

But their testimonies did not agree, as Mark explains, for he puts it this way, 'The chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and they found none; for many spoke false testimony against him, and their testimonies were not in agreement. And others rose up and gave false testimony against him saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will make another not made with hands. But not even these testimonies agreed.'³⁰⁷ For testimony agrees when the witnesses say the same things, but not when they differ, as the testimony of those did who offered testimonies against Jesus. And if Matthew and Mark are telling the truth (which we must believe), let us attempt to show how there was no agreeing testimony even between two who gave testimony because they did not offer the same testimonies. For according to Matthew they said, 'This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days', but according to Mark they said, 'We heard him saying, I am destroying this temple made with hands, and in three days I will rebuild another not made with hands.'³⁰⁸ Either, therefore, when they repeat these words, since they have not said the same things, their testimonies were not found to be in agreement, or one indeed said what Matthew sets forth, and another spoke according to what Mark wrote, and in this way 'their testimonies were not in agreement.'³⁰⁹

109 'And the high priest arose and said to him, Are you making no response to these things that those are testifying against you? And Jesus remained silent.'³¹⁰

It is possible in these words to understand the prophesy to have been fulfilled which says, 'While the sinner took a stand against me, I was speechless and humbled, and I refrained from good words,'³¹¹ so that that sinner mentioned in these prophetic words is understood to be Caiaphas who took a stand against Jesus. At the same time, we also learn from this passage to despise the voices of those who calumniate and bear false testimony, that we may hold them not to be worthy of our response, nor defend ourselves where there is no agreement in what is being said against us. For what is the necessity to resist those who resist themselves by making contrary statements? It is far better freely and bravely to remain silent than to offer a defence to no avail, so that we not be humiliated by false witnesses and malicious calumniators.

110 'And the chief priest said to him: I adjure you by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. And Jesus said to him: You have said it.'³¹²

³⁰⁶ Dt 19:15.

³¹⁰ Mt 26:62, 63.

³⁰⁷ Mk 14:55-9.

³¹¹ Ps 38:2, 3.

³⁰⁸ Mk 14:58.

³¹² Mt 26:63-4.

³⁰⁹ Mk 14:59.

Indeed, we find the practice of adjuring several times in the Law. For example, in Numbers the Law says, 'The priest shall adjure her' (that is, that woman in whose husband there is a 'spirit of jealousy') 'and he' (that is, the priest) 'shall say to the woman: If another man did not sleep with you, and if you have not transgressed so that you are defiled by a man who is not your husband, you will be unharmed by this water of reproach that has been cursed.'³¹³ It says a few lines later, 'The priest shall adjure the woman with the adjurations of this curse.'³¹⁴ Likewise, in the third book of the Kings, King Ahab says to Micaiah, 'Now for the second time I adjure you to tell me the truth in the name of the Lord.'³¹⁵ Now a king adjures a prophet, and he does not adjure in the same way the priest does in Numbers, for the latter adjures on the basis of a precept of the Law, but the former adjures on the basis of his own will. In the present passage, a priest adjures Jesus 'by the living God'. But I do not think it is necessary that a person who desires to live in accordance with the Gospel adjure another. For it is like what the Lord himself says in the Gospel, 'But I say to you, Do not swear at all' and do not adjure at all.'³¹⁶ For if it is not permitted to swear so far as it is contained in Christ's command in the Gospel, it is true that it is not permitted to adjure another.'³¹⁷ Therefore, the 'chief priest' unlawfully adjured Jesus, although he appeared to have adjured him 'by the living God'.

Someone will ask if it is proper to adjure demons. The person who looks to the multitudes who have dared to do such things will say that this is not done for no reason; but the person who looks to Jesus *** who commands demons,³¹⁸ but even when he gives authority to his disciples over all demons and the power to heal illnesses,³¹⁹ will say that adjuring demons is not based on the authority given by the Saviour, for it is Jewish.³²⁰ This (although sometimes something similar occurs among us) is similar to the fact that demons used to be adjured by adjurations written by Solomon. But the people themselves who used to use those adjurations quite often did not use the properly appointed books for this, but adjured demons with formulas received from a Hebrew.

However, it did not seem appropriate that our Lord respond to the adjuration of the chief priest, as if, contrary to his own will, he experienced a power from the one adjuring him. For this reason, he neither denied that he was the Christ, the Son of God, nor did he admit it openly, but treating the one adjuring him as if he were a witness (since it was the priest who, in his interrogation, spoke the words, 'Christ, the Son of God') he says, 'You said it.'³²¹

³¹³ Num 5:19, 14.

³¹⁴ See Num 5:21 (LXX).

³¹⁵ 3 Kgs 22:16.

³¹⁶ Mt 5:34.

³¹⁷ Greek fragment: An oath is something other than the administration of an oath.

³¹⁸ See Mk 1:27.

³¹⁹ See Mt 10:1.

³²⁰ Greek fragment: For the demons, being invisible spirits are adjured to confess. But you, Caiaphas, have seen Jesus who is present command demons without adjuring them and granting this kind of authority to his disciples.

³²¹ Greek fragment: Since, then, he did not put the question legitimately, Christ could not deny that he was the Son of God, but neither did he answer the rashness of the one who asked.

And because 'everyone who commits sin has been born of the devil',³²² and the chief priest, who was baiting Jesus, also committed sin, and because he had been born of the devil, as it were, he was imitating his own father who twice dubiously asked the Saviour, 'If you are the Son of God', as it is written in the temptation narrative.³²³ For 'If you are the Son of God' and 'If you are the Christ the Son of God' are similar. For one can say correctly on this passage that doubting whether he is Son of God or whether he is the Christ is the work of the devil and of the chief priest who is questioning our Lord in a treacherous manner. Peter, however, ascertained nothing like this, for without any doubt he proclaimed, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'.³²⁴ He did not preface his statement with 'If'. He was pronounced 'blessed' because 'flesh and blood' had not revealed it to him, 'but God the Father who is in heaven'.³²⁵ But those who say doubtfully, 'If you are the Son of God' are removed from all beatitude. For because that chief priest was not worthy of the doctrine of Christ, he does not teach him, nor does he say, 'I am'. Instead, taking the expression of the priest's own mouth, he converts it to a refutation and says, 'You said it', so that, in this way he appears to be blamed, not taught.

111 'Nevertheless, I say to you, From now you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven'.³²⁶

Since it is not written, 'at the right hand' of God but, as by all the evangelists, at the right hand 'of power' (without an addition of 'God'), it is worth investigating what it means for the Son of Man to sit at the right hand 'of power'. Likewise, the three evangelists write similarly, 'You will see sitting'. It is conceded, indeed, to the simple, who can dare nothing high because it says 'sitting', as if it should say grounded upon power. But for those who are able to search all things in the spirit, 'even the depths of God',³²⁷ there are also the statements: 'You who sit upon the cherubim, Appear', and, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a high and elevated seat', and, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet', and other similar statements that are made of God sitting and are said in a similar manner of Christ.³²⁸ We must compare these statements with the present saying so that we may see from this lowly and fable-like valuation what the sitting of Christ in a human fashion might mean. Now it seems to me that the sitting of the Son of Man indicates a kind of regal stability and durability. Therefore he, who alone is power and is properly so designated and who receives from the Father all authority as 'in heaven so also on earth' has been solidly established 'at the right hand'. At last even adversaries will behold this firm foundation after which the blessed will see him with joy.

The Gospel according to Mark, however, does not have 'from now' but says simply, 'You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power'.³²⁹ There

³²² 1 Jn 3:8.

³²⁶ Mt 26:64.

³²³ Mt 4:3, 6.

³²⁷ See 1 Cor 2:10.

³²⁴ Mt 16:16.

³²⁸ Ps 80:1; Is 6:1; Ps 110:1.

³²⁵ Mt 16:16, 17.

³²⁹ Mk 14:62.

will be nothing in this statement contrary to the things we are relating. But we must investigate in relation to Matthew's Gospel which says, 'from now you will see', and that according to Luke which says, 'from this time the Son of Man will' and the rest, whether these things of which the Saviour spoke were fulfilled among those who heard what he said: 'From now you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power'. Now we say that it can be seen to have been fulfilled because from that time, that is from the time of the dispensation, the Son of Man sits 'at the right hand of power' and his disciples saw him rising from the dead, and in this way, they saw him established 'at the right hand of power' as we related above. Or consider it as follows: See if you can measure an hour and a day not in relation to the brief span that hours and days have among humans, but by the eternal length they have with the Lord for whom it is one day from the founding of the world to its consummation. This is shown by the parable where it speaks of workers being hired early for the vineyard and at the third hour, the sixth, and up to the eleventh.³³⁰ There is nothing strange, then, that in this passage the Saviour says, 'from now' to those who heard him at that time, meaning a very brief period until that time when he said, 'You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power'. Perhaps it was then that 'the Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.'³³¹ Among those present were also those to whom he said, 'From now you will see', for Caiaphas, who was questioning Christ with treacherous intent, was an enemy.

And he prophesied not only that they will see him 'sitting' at the right hand 'of power', but also that they will see him 'coming' (as Matthew, at least, says) 'on the clouds of heaven'. But what are the clouds on which he who has been firmly established 'at the right hand of power' will come, or with which he will come, or to what clouds does the truth of God reach, in relation to the statement, 'And your truth reaches to the clouds'?³³² These living clouds are the prophets of God and the apostles of Christ to whom he commands to rain, when necessary, or not to rain on a fruitless vineyard.³³³ But if someone does not want the clouds on which and with which the Son of Man will come when he appears to be of this kind, let him know that God who is Word, Wisdom, Truth, and Justice,³³⁴ always comes on and with those [prophets and apostles]³³⁵ revealing his advent to those worthy of himself. Moreover, these clouds that we are discussing, which bear, as it were, 'the image of the heavenly' are clouds of that heaven that does not pass away, being worthy of the seat of God and the kingdom of God, since they are, as it were, 'heirs of God and coheirs of Christ', that also reign with him.³³⁶

³³⁰ See Mt 20:1-7.

³³¹ Ps 110:1.

³³² Ps 35:6.

³³³ See Is 5:6, 7.

³³⁴ See Jn 1:1; 14:6; 1 Cor 1:30.

³³⁵ My addition.

³³⁶ See 1 Cor 15:49; Mt 5:34; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12.

112 'Then the chief priest ripped his garments and said, He has blasphemed.'³³⁷

When the Lord prophesied these things that priest, who was the enemy of the Lord, who was, as it were, not near so that he might see the Son of Man and the power at whose right hand he was sitting, being bent over, as it were, and incapable of looking upwards, not hearing what he said, 'ripped his garments', showing his own shamefulfulness and nakedness of soul, and revealing symbolically that the ancient priesthood and his priestly robe and form of worship, which rested on the letter, were to be ripped to pieces.³³⁸ Moreover, he considered the magnitude of Jesus' words to be blasphemy, and valued Jewish pride and the deceptive account of the letter that kills. And he considered (as if he understood) the words of Christ, which were witnesses to his divinity (with respect to those who could understand them), to be sufficient testimony against him, and he said to those who felt the same: 'Behold, now you have heard his blasphemy; what do you think', while they 'answered' and pronounced against their own soul, that Jesus 'deserves to die'. How great an error do you think it was to pronounce that the original life of all, itself deserved to die and, on the testimony of so many rising up, not to take into account the fountain of life from which life was flowing into all living beings, since 'just as the Father has life in himself, so he also gave to the Son to have life in himself'?³³⁹

113 'Then they spit in his face and hit him with their fists; others slapped him in the face and said, Prophecy to us, Christ. Who is it who struck you?'³⁴⁰

It was extremely wicked, in my opinion, that those, who had heard Jesus say, 'Nevertheless I say to you that from now you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven,'³⁴¹ dared to spit 'in his face'. For they thought that by doing this they would confuse him into making false assertions and that he who was seated 'at the right hand of power' and was to come 'on the clouds' would not hold up under the disgrace of the spitting. For they were ignorant of the words of Isaiah the prophet who prophesies these very things about him and says in the person of the Lord himself, our Saviour: 'Why did I come, and there was no one? I called, and there was no one who listened? Is my hand not strong to rescue? Am I not able to snatch away? Behold, by my rebuke I will make the sea a desert and rivers dry. Their fish will dry up because they have no water, and they will die from thirst. And I will clothe heaven with darkness and its cloak will be like sackcloth. The Lord gives me a tongue for teaching so that I may know how I should speak the word. He positioned me in the morning; He laid on me an ear to hear, and the teaching of the Lord will open my ears; moreover, I am not unbelieving, nor do I speak contrary things. I have offered my back to the whips and my cheeks to slaps; I have not averted my face from the shame of spit, and the Lord God has become my helper.'³⁴²

³³⁷ Mt 26:65.

³³⁸ Greek fragment: Having shown his shamefulfulness (the nakedness of his soul) and the robe to be ripped in pieces as a symbol of the ancient priesthood.

³³⁹ Jn 5:26.

³⁴⁰ Mt 26:67, 68.

³⁴¹ Mt 26:64.

³⁴² Is 50:2-7.

All who are from the church agree that it is Christ who says: 'The Lord, the Lord has given me a tongue for teaching' and the other things which I have set out.³⁴³ But I have appropriately set out also those words related to these further up, wishing to show that the prophesy that he was spit on and struck is about him who was full of glory. For in relation to what other person is it proper to say, 'I came', other than Christ who came into the world? Or about whom was it fitting to say, 'I called, and there was no one who listened',³⁴⁴ unless him who came to call the Jewish people and was not heard and, therefore, did not deliver the people nor snatch it away, but abandoned it? It is Christ, moreover, who says, 'Behold, by my rebuke I will make the sea a desert and rivers dry',³⁴⁵ who will bring about the consummation of the world. For it is he who will clothe heaven with 'darkness' and will clothe it 'as sackcloth', and when he received a 'tongue for teaching' from the Father knew how 'he should speak the word' that God had entrusted to him; and 'he laid on him an ear' that he might hear more than all who hear, and the 'teaching' of the Father opened an ear for him because he did not disbelieve the Father who sent him, nor did he speak against him, and by his own labour he taught those desiring to learn gentleness and praiseworthy humility. His labour, moreover, was in the fact that he was teaching those who did these things, when he offers his 'back to the whips and his cheeks to slaps' and does not turn his face away 'from the shame of the spit',³⁴⁶ that he himself delivered us (as I think), who had deserved to suffer all these acts of disgrace, by suffering them for us. For 'he' did not 'die for us'³⁴⁷ that we might not die, but that we might not die for ourselves; and he was cut down by the blows and was spit out for us, that we, who had deserved all these things because of our sins, might not suffer them, but that when we suffer these things for the sake of justice we might receive them gladly. Indeed Paul says of the Saviour that 'he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross'.³⁴⁸ For it is not out of place for the person who wants to count in how many ways Christ humbled himself to enumerate (in addition to those things that Paul mentions: 'He humbled himself and became obedient unto death') that he also humbled himself unto 'slaps', and unto 'the shame of spit' and 'beatings' and death, on account of all of which 'God exalted him'.³⁴⁹ For it was not because of his death alone that he endured to the end for which God exalted him, but also for the slaps and spit and the other things.

Moreover, it is also made clear in the Law that the insult of spitting is understood as an extreme insult. It is written there that if the brother-in-law of a woman whose husband has died is not willing to accept her, she shall go to him who is not willing to take her as his wife, and before the elders shall remove 'one of his sandals from his feet and spit in his face and say, So shall they do to the man who will not build up his brother's house'.³⁵⁰ Christ, therefore, did not

³⁴³ Is 50:4.³⁴⁴ Is 50:2.³⁴⁵ Ibid.³⁴⁶ Is 50:6.³⁴⁷ See Rom 5:8.³⁴⁸ Phil 2:8.³⁴⁹ See Phil 2:8, 9; Is 50:6.³⁵⁰ See Dt 25:7-9.

turn his face away 'from the shame of spit', so that his face might be glorified even more than Moses' face was glorified with a glory that was so great and of such a kind that (in comparison with the glorification of Moses) the glorification of Moses' face was destroyed, as the light of a lamp is destroyed in the presence of the sun, and as knowledge which is in part is destroyed 'when what is perfect has come'.³⁵¹ But they also struck the holy head of the church with their fists wherefore they were themselves struck by Satan, not so that they might be troubled nor that their power might be brought to an end, but that, delivered to the enemy and conquered, they might suffer the sin they had committed when they struck Jesus. And not at all content with spitting 'in his face and striking him', they also slapped him and mockingly said: 'Prophecy to us, Who struck you?' For this they have received an eternal blow and have been deprived of all prophecy, struck and beaten, and are unwillingly to accept correction, about which Jeremiah uttered this very prophecy: 'You have scourged them and they were not sorry, and they were unwilling to accept correction.'³⁵² Even now those who insult someone in the church and do these things to him are spitting 'in the face' of Christ and striking Christ with their fists and slapping him.

114 'But Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and one of the maidservants approached him and said: You also were with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied it before them all saying, I do not know what you are talking about. Then he went out to the entrance and another maidservant saw him and said to those there: This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again, he denied with an oath: I do not know the man. A little later those who were standing there approached Peter and said: Truly you are one of them, for your speech makes you stand out. Then Peter began to take vows and swear with an oath saying, I do not know the man. Immediately the cock crowed, and Peter remembered Jesus' words to him: Before the cock crows you will deny me three times. Peter went out and wept bitterly.'³⁵³

When we consider Peter's denial in detail, we say that 'no one can say Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit' (as Paul teaches us³⁵⁴), and 'the Holy Spirit was not yet at that time' in human beings 'because Jesus had not been glorified' (as John says³⁵⁵), therefore, it was not possible to confess Jesus at that time, not even for one such as that famous Peter. He was certainly not to be censured when he did not confess Jesus since it is said to those who confess, 'You are not the ones who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.'³⁵⁶

³⁵¹ See 2 Cor 3:7-11; 1 Cor 13:9, 10.

³⁵² Jer 5:3.

³⁵³ Mt 26:69-75.

³⁵⁴ 1 Cor 12:3.

³⁵⁵ Jn 7:39.

³⁵⁶ Mt 10:20. Greek fragment: Now if no one can say 'Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit', and 'The Holy Spirit was not yet because Jesus had not been glorified', it was not possible for Peter to confess, wherefore he is not censured. The Saviour says to those who confess, 'You are not the ones who speak, but the Spirit of God that speaks in you'.

In our case, however, since that Spirit of our Father is able to speak in us and since it is in our power to give 'place' in us to the Holy Spirit and not 'to the devil',³⁵⁷ if we deny him, we will have no excuse.

But perhaps also anyone who is 'in the courtyard' of Caiaphas 'the chief priest' cannot confess Jesus as Lord unless he shall 'leave' his courtyard and be removed from every teaching contrary to Jesus and handed down as Jewish traditions which are not in agreement with the meaning of the Scriptures but are based on the 'commands and teachings of men'.³⁵⁸ For consider that when Peter was sitting 'outside' separated from Jesus and stationed 'in the courtyard' of the chief priest, he denied Jesus 'before all'. Likewise, he did it again a second time when he was not outside 'the entrance'. Although he wished to go out, he had not yet gone out 'the entrance'.³⁵⁹ But he did it also a third time in turn, when those 'who were standing there said: Truly you are one of them' and when he 'began to take vows and swear with an oath: I do not know the man'. He was still not outside. And all the denials took place in that night and in darkness before the day should arrive and the sign of the day, that is, the crowing of the cock which awakens those who wish from sleep. And for example, if Peter had denied after the cock crowed, as it is said, 'The night has passed; the day has drawn near, let us walk honestly as in the day',³⁶⁰ Peter would have deserved no excuse. And perhaps also everyone who denies Jesus appears to deny him before the cock crows so that the sin of their denial may receive treatment, since the sun of righteousness has not yet been born for them nor has its rising approached them.³⁶¹ But if, after the rising of this kind of sun on the soul, 'we shall have sinned wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sin, but a terrible judgement and burning of fire, which will devour the enemies'.³⁶²

Indeed, at that time it was not appropriate to say in relation to Peter's denial, 'How much worse punishments do you suppose they deserves who have trampled on the Son of God, treated the blood of the covenant with which they have been sanctified as worthless, and outraged the Spirit of grace?',³⁶³ because Peter had not yet been sanctified by the blood of Christ (which was the blood of the new covenant), nor did he outrage the Spirit of grace which he had not received at the beginning, for 'Jesus had not yet been glorified', 'nor was the Holy Spirit' in people.³⁶⁴ But if we shall have committed this impious sin of

³⁵⁷ See Eph 4:27.

³⁵⁸ See Mk 7:7, 8.

³⁵⁹ Greek fragment: Now observe that the second denial was not outside the courtyard but in it.

³⁶⁰ Rom 13:12, 13. Greek fragment: The three denials, then, were in the night, before the sign of the day was present which awakens [one] from natural sleep. But perhaps if he had denied after the cock crowed, when it is said that 'the night is spent and the day has arrived', he would have been unpardonable.

³⁶¹ See Mal 4:2.

³⁶² See Heb 10:26, 27.

³⁶³ Heb 10:29.

³⁶⁴ See Jn 7:39. Greek fragment: And perhaps also He who has outraged 'the Holy Spirit' does not apply to Peter, for the 'Spirit' was not yet.

denial, it is appropriate to say all of these things, because we have been sanctified by the blood of the covenant and we have received 'the Spirit of grace'. Moreover, it is worse than any other sin to treat the most precious 'blood of the covenant as worthless' and to outrage the Spirit of grace. Consequently, if we deny the Son of God we cannot be forgiven 'in this age or in the future one'. Since then 'the night has passed' for us 'and the day has drawn near' and the crowing of the cock, the sign of the day, has resounded for us, let us, therefore, stand, 'struggling against sin to the point of blood' and, for the sake of love that never fails, let us suffer all things so that we may obtain an inheritance in those things with the perfect.³⁶⁵ And take note of this: If someone shall have denied, even frequently, prior to the crowing of the cock, prior to the Holy Spirit, and in the time of deep night, that person can live. This is clear from the fact that Peter denied 'three times'. But if someone should deny even once after the crowing of the cock, no matter what danger he find himself in, 'it is impossible to renew him to repentance since he has again crucified to himself the Son of God'.³⁶⁶ But let the person caught in a sin of denial of this kind look to what has been written: 'Woe to those who draw their sins to themselves as with a long rope, and their iniquities as with the thong of a calf's yoke'.³⁶⁷ Let him not say, 'Our sins are on us, how shall we live? I live, says the Lord, as I do not wish the death of a sinner so much as his repentance'.³⁶⁸ For God himself is aware, of whom it is written: 'And he, being wise, will bring evils on them';³⁶⁹ he will bring one sort of evils on those who deny and do not repent, and another on those who deny and repent, and another sort of good things on those who have never denied 'before men' in either their speech or actions.³⁷⁰ But let us be far removed from that first 'maidservant', and the second, and from all who stand 'in the courtyard' of that chief priest and at his entrance, so that we are not in the vicinity of those who cause the person who happens to be next to them to deny him.

But we know who the 'maidservant' of the chief priest is, if we understand who the maidservant of God is of whom it is written, 'I am your servant, and the son of your maidservant'.³⁷¹ Moreover, you will also be able to know what the courtyards of the chief priest are if you have understood what the courtyards of the house of God are, of which it is written: 'Behold now bless the Lord all servants of the Lord', 'you who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courtyards of the house of our God'.³⁷² But perhaps we ought to say something about another 'maidservant' too. Let us understand what has been written so

³⁶⁵ See Rom 13:12; Heb 12:4; 1 Cor 13:8.

³⁶⁶ See Heb 6:4, 6.

³⁶⁷ Is 5:18.

³⁶⁸ See Ez 33:10, 11.

³⁶⁹ Is 31:2.

³⁷⁰ See Mt 10:33.

³⁷¹ Ps 116:7. Greek fragment: But also, the one who knows the saying, 'I am your servant and the son of your maidservant', is removed from the maidservant who causes one to deny Christ.

³⁷² Ps 134:1; 135:1, 2. Greek fragment: He, therefore, who has heard the words, 'Behold now bless the Lord all you servants of the Lord who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God'.

that we may withdraw even from her: 'As the eyes of a maidservant are on the hands of her mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God, until he is merciful to us.'³⁷³ I think the first maidservant of the chief priest who causes the disciples of Christ to deny is to be understood as the synagogue of the Jews 'according to the flesh' who frequently force the faithful to deny.³⁷⁴ The second maidservant is the congregation of the Gentiles who also persecute Christians and put pressure on them to deny. The third group that stands in the courtyards is the servants of the various heresies who also compel disciples to deny the truth of Christ. But Peter not only denied 'three times' in the night; he also took a vow and swore, 'I do not know the man.' At that time, indeed, he still knew Christ 'according to the flesh'; he could not yet say, 'Even if at one time we knew Christ according to the flesh, we do not now know him in this way,' for so long as the sign of the day was not present, Peter was not mindful of the words of Jesus when he denied him.³⁷⁵ But after the messenger of the day called out to him, then 'he remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.' And when 'he remembered the word' of Christ, he was not 'in the courtyard' of the chief priest or near its 'entrance' but outside; otherwise he would never have wept, for thus it is written: 'He went out and wept bitterly.' Therefore, in Luke's Gospel 'the sinful woman' repents and 'weeps' at the Lord's feet; here Peter 'departs' from the courtyard of the chief priest and weeps for the severity of his sin, making his tears bitter in repentance.³⁷⁶

³⁷³ Ps 123:2.³⁷⁴ See 2 Cor 5:16.³⁷⁵ 2 Cor 5:16.³⁷⁶ Greek fragment: In these [words] Peter departs from those who caused him to deny and makes his weeping bitter with repentance because of his bitterness in having sinned.

Series 115-45 (Matthew 27)

115 'And when it was early all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus that they might deliver him to death; and when he had been bound they led him and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.'¹

The person who stumbles in the darkness and in the night deserves pardon, but the person who stumbles in broad daylight can never defend his error as if it overpowered him (especially when he stumbles having the 'lamp of the body' within him²) but must blame it on his own greediness. But we have said this to show that the disciples of Christ stumbled in the night, in accordance with what the Lord said to them previously: 'You will all stumble because of me in this night', and because Peter denied him three times before the crow of the cock.³ But 'all the chief priests and elders of the people' who take 'counsel' against Jesus 'when it is morning' sin in the light with full knowledge. It is written of this counsel in the Psalms that they plotted in agreement 'as one' 'to deliver' Christ 'to death', thinking that by his death they would extinguish his teaching and the faith in him among those who believed in him as in the Son of God.⁴ But the 'chief priests' of the worship system of the letter that kills plot such things against him, and the elders, the ministers of condemnation,⁵ bind Jesus who sets free from bonds. He says to those who are in bonds, 'Come forth',⁶ and sets free those fettered and says: 'Let us burst their bonds and throw their yoke from us.'⁷ He freed 'a daughter of Abraham' from bonds who had been bound by Satan 'eighteen years' so that now she 'who previously had not been able even to look up is not stooped at all'.⁸ They bound him, because he

¹ Mt 27:1, 2. ² See Mt 6:22.

³ Greek fragment: The disciples of Christ stumble in the night; these, however, do not stumble in darkness because of what is around them, but are unpardonable because they sin with abandon when the day is beginning for them.

⁴ See Ps 2:2. Greek fragment: But they have erred also by thinking that by putting Jesus to death they would extinguish his teaching and stop those who believe.

⁵ See 2 Cor 3:6, 9. ⁶ Is 49:9.

⁷ Ps 2:3. Greek fragment: These, therefore, bound the 'one who says to those in bondage, Come forth' and to those who are fettered 'Be free', fulfilling the prophecy that says, 'Let us bind the just one because he causes us difficulties' (Is 3:10). But he said, 'Let us burst their bonds' and the words that follow in the Psalm.

⁸ Lk 13:16, 11.

was willing; and in the act of being bound he stealthily seized the very bonds and burst them, so that 'the chief priests and elders' of the Jews no longer have bonds against people, since the Lord clearly burst them in himself.

But if someone demands a Scripture from me that shows these words about the bonds with which the 'chief priests and elders' bound Jesus being burst, let him understand that it was for this very reason that Jesus himself says through the prophet, 'Let us burst their bonds', as if he should say, 'Let us' also 'throw off the yoke' of the chief priests and elders, or rather of those chief priests who are at work among them together with the rulers of their land who 'stood side by side', and the chief priests who 'came together as one against the Lord and against his Christ'.⁹ In addition it will quiet you even more to recognize that although those who 'took counsel' against Jesus bound him and led him off, nevertheless he burst the bonds if you understand the things written of Samson who was frequently bound and burst the bonds of the Philistines because he was a Nazarite of God and used to have hair filled with power. If, therefore, Samson could burst the bonds of the Philistines with which he was frequently bound because of the power in the hair which he used to have on his head, how much more likely is it that Christ, after he had performed so many wonders and miracles, and willingly delivered himself to bonds (putting the deity in himself to rest and repose, so that he might be bound), undoubtedly bursts the bonds that are put around him. Samson's bonds were symbols of those later bonds.

116 'And they delivered him to Pontius Pilate'.¹⁰

But it is not easy to answer briefly whether or not each of the names of the governor also have some significance appropriate to the dispensation of our Lord and Saviour. The origins from which the names Pontius and Pilate are derived could affect someone, but let everyone capable of investigating consider whether one would be affected positively or not.

117 'Then when Judas who betrayed him saw that he was condemned, he repented and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, I have sinned because I have betrayed righteous blood. But they said, What is that to us? You shall see to it. And he threw the silver coins into the temple and left, and he went out and hanged himself with a noose. But the chief priests who took the silver coins said, It is not permitted to put them in the temple treasury because it is the price of blood. And when they had taken counsel among themselves they purchased the field of the potter for the burial of foreigners. That is why that field is called Acheldemach, which means field of blood, to this day. At that time what Jeremiah the prophet said was fulfilled: And they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been put, because they had put a price on one of the sons of Israel, and they paid the coins for the field of the potter as the Lord ordered me'.¹¹

⁹ See Ps 2:2, 3.

¹⁰ Mt 27:2.

¹¹ Mt 27:3-10.

Let those respond to me who introduce certain tales about natures thinking they are expressing the truth and unaware that their conjecture makes the creator guilty of iniquity. He indeed makes certain vessels 'for honour', not because their virtue brings honour on them, and certain vessels 'for reproach' not because their sin brings reproach on them.¹²

For if Judas was doomed to perdition by nature, how did he experience repentance that was so great that the desire for the thirty pieces of silver for which he had undertaken the impious audacity of the betrayal did not overcome him?¹³ For if they refer the saying, 'An evil tree cannot produce good fruits,'¹⁴ to the property of natures, let them explain how Judas, unless he possessed some goodness, turned back, since 'he returned the thirty pieces of silver'. Even if he did not turn perfectly or as he ought, he said, in recognition of his sin, 'I have sinned by betraying righteous blood'. How did this happen if it was not from the planting of good things in his mind and the sowing of virtue which is sown in every rational soul that Judas did not cultivate and, therefore, fell into such a sin? For if some people possess a nature to be destroyed, there is no question that Judas possessed a greater amount of the nature destined for destruction because Judas would undoubtedly appear to have been such if, once he had betrayed 'righteous blood', he had not returned the money because he took delight in it, or if, when he returned it he had not said, 'I have sinned by betraying righteous blood'. And if indeed Judas had said what he said after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, perhaps likewise it would have been said that the power of the resurrection itself compelled him to repent of his deed and confess his sin.¹⁵ But now directly as he sees him delivered to Pilate, he is pricked and repents; but perhaps he also recalled what Jesus had often told his disciples about his future resurrection.¹⁶

Therefore, when Judas perceived the magnitude of his action, he repented, and when he confessed his sin he spoke from the repentance of his heart because he had handed over righteous blood, 'but he did not' repent 'with understanding' as he should have repented.¹⁷ For he supposed that his death would precede that of the teacher and that he would rush to him with his soul bare so as to deserve mercy by confessing and pleading.¹⁸ It was because he

¹² See Rom 9:21.

¹³ Greek fragment: But the remnant of the words of Christ in him overcame his love of money.

¹⁴ Mt 7:18.

¹⁵ Greek fragment: Wherefore he was not compelled as it were after his resurrection, but he showed repentance before the condemnation by Pilate.

¹⁶ But perhaps also when he saw Jesus delivered to Pilate he remembered that Jesus had said this and that he will arise.

¹⁷ See Rom 10:2. Greek fragment: He hanged himself although he fervently repented, 'but not with understanding'.

¹⁸ Greek fragment: But perhaps he thought, having anticipated Jesus' death and going to meet him, to approach him as a suppliant with his soul bare confessing the judgement against himself, that his confession would be accepted.

knew he had sinned that he judged and condemned himself. He did not consider what Job said when he had been set in such great calamities: 'Would that I could kill myself, or ask someone to do it for me.'¹⁹ Judas did not see that it is inappropriate for a servant of God to thrust himself from this life. One must await the judgement of God for this too.

Let us see now if, with the help of God, we can explain what is said (which lies hidden to many when they interpret the words of this passage). 'But when Judas, who betrayed him, saw that he was condemned, he repented and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests' and what follows.²⁰ Now if it had been written that Judas had done these things after Pilate's sentence and after Jesus had been beaten with the scourges and Pilate delivered him to the Jews that they might crucify him,²¹ we would, of course, raise no questions about the words: 'But when he saw that he was condemned'. But now, how did Judas see 'that he was condemned' (for Jesus had at this time neither been condemned nor interrogated by Pilate)?²² Perhaps, then, someone will say (to make sense) that in his mental reflection he saw the end result of the matter because he saw him betrayed by the chief priests and the elders of the people. Another, however, will take this approach and say that the words, 'but Judas seeing that he was condemned' refer to Judas himself. For when the chief priests and elders of the people had delivered Jesus to Pilate,²³ then Judas perceived his own evil and understood that one who dared do such things was doubtless judged and 'condemned' by God. Perhaps also Satan, who had entered Judas after the 'dipped bread',²⁴ was present in him until Jesus had been handed over to Pilate. However, after Judas did what the devil wished 'the devil withdrew from him'²⁵ and when he withdrew Judas understood and saw that because he betrayed 'righteous blood' he was 'condemned' by God, and he was able to understand because his mind was now free and the devil was not working in it. He was able, therefore, once the devil withdrew from him, to choose to repent and to give the thirty pieces of silver back to those who had given them to him. And, once the devil withdrew, he could say what he could not say before he had withdrawn from him, for as long as the devil filled his

¹⁹ Job 30:24. Greek fragment: Nor did he remember that Job says, after so many crises, 'O that I might lay hands on myself or beseech another and he will do it for me'. These words remove taking oneself out of life in any way whatsoever.

²⁰ Mt 27:3.

²¹ Greek fragment: Wherefore seeing how Judas is not constrained after Jesus' resurrection, but shows his repentance before the condemnation by Pilate.

²² Greek fragment: Since Jesus had not yet been condemned by Pilate, Judas 'who betrayed him', did not think the chief priests would pronounce the death sentence against him, and when he perceived what had happened in the counsel he virtually saw Jesus condemned overall. Or, the expression, 'he was condemned', refers to Judas when he understood for how great an evil he had been condemned by God, or 'Satan, who entered him after the morsel' was present in him until Jesus was delivered to Pilate, and 'he departed from him for a season' so as to grant the opportunity for repentance....

²³ See Mt 27: 1, 2.

²⁴ See Jn 13:26.

²⁵ See Lk 4:13.

heart he could not say, 'I have sinned by betraying righteous blood'. But we are not saying that when the devil withdraws from any such person he no longer watches for a chance to ambush him. No, he watches for another opportunity when it may be possible again to attach himself to the person. And after one has become aware of his second sin, the devil even watches for the opportunity for a third deception in the person.

If we need to provide examples, let us look at him who 'had his father's wife' in the first epistle to the Corinthians,²⁶ for one could not practise evil of this magnitude apart from the mighty work of the devil. He repented of this evil, as the Scripture itself testifies, and was made sorrowful 'with a sorrow according to God', a sorrow 'that produces a steadfast repentance to salvation'. But after he had experienced sorrow of this nature the devil again attached himself to him, wishing to magnify his sorrow itself beyond measure so that that very sorrow would no longer be 'according to God' but that, magnified excessively he might swallow up sorrow beyond measure and more than he ought to be sorrowful, and in this way Satan might swallow him up in his 'overwhelming sorrow'.²⁷ Because the apostle recognizes this in advance, he counsels the Corinthians to confirm their 'love for him', giving this reason, 'that such a one not be swallowed up with overwhelming sorrow' 'for', he says, 'we are not ignorant of his cunning'.²⁸ Something similar happened in the case of Judas who betrayed Jesus, and in the likeness of that sorrow 'that produces a steadfast repentance to salvation'²⁹ he too became sorrowful after which he was brought to repentance and 'returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests saying, I have sinned by betraying righteous blood'.³⁰ This action itself was repentance and the sorrow of salvation, but because he never watched over his heart nor did he become sorrowful judiciously, but experienced overwhelming sorrow which was caused by the devil himself (who wanted to swallow him up in 'overwhelming sorrow'), therefore, when he returns those pieces of silver to the temple 'he goes off and hangs himself with a noose'. For if, after he returned the money and confessed that he had sinned by betraying 'righteous blood', he had not 'gone off and hanged himself with a noose' but had searched for 'a place of repentance' and had observed a time of repentance,³¹ perhaps he too would have found him who said, 'As I live, I do not wish the death of the sinner so much as his repentance'.³²

²⁶ 1 Cor 5:1.

²⁷ See 2 Cor 7:9, 10; 2:7.

²⁸ See 2 Cor 2:7, 8, 11.

²⁹ See 2 Cor 7:10.

³⁰ Greek fragment: And he says, 'I have sinned having betrayed innocent blood', thinking this would accomplish something. Wherefore, when he heard the words, 'What is that to us? You see to it', he throws the silver and hangs himself not [being able] to bear 'the overwhelming sorrow'.

³¹ Greek fragment: And he was strangled and unclean because the blood remained in his flesh. And perhaps he does this because he was swallowed by a second evil, 'the overwhelming sorrow', since he had not correctly searched for 'a place of repentance'....

³² See Heb 12:17; Ez 33:11.

But I think that Judas understands something greater in conformity with the Saviour when 'he throws the thirty pieces of silver' nowhere else than 'in the temple', where he knew the Saviour in his action had thrown the 'sheep and oxen' out of the temple and had said to 'those selling doves, Remove these from here and do not make my Father's house a house of business'.³³ Therefore, being sufficiently hopeless of himself because he understood the magnitude of his sin, he threw 'those pieces of silver into the temple and went off and hanged himself with a noose'. But when they received those pieces of silver they wanted to respect something proper and not 'put them in the temple treasury', where the gifts of people for the needs of the poor were gathered, for they thought it impious to 'put the price of blood into the temple treasury'. For this reason, they 'took counsel' and established the 'field of the potter' and the clay of the worker from that money, for they saw that it was more appropriate for that money to be spent in respect to the dead and a place for the dead and their burial since it was 'the price of blood', than to be placed in the temple treasury or applied to some other respectable need. But because there are differences among the places of the dead (since many, indeed, by vow are desirably buried in their ancestral tombs, but others, because of one disaster or another, are often buried in foreign tombs), therefore, when they receive 'the price of the blood' of Jesus they used it to acquire the field of some 'potter', so that foreign dead might be buried in it, meriting this not by vow but by some inimical accident. But if it is also appropriate to understand foreigners spiritually, we say that foreigners are those who are alienated from God and are strangers to his covenants up to the end.³⁴ Foreigners of this kind, therefore, have as their end to be buried in the field 'of the potter', which was acquired with the price 'of blood'. For they are just who say, 'We have been buried with' Christ 'in a new tomb which has been cut out of a rock', 'in a hewn tomb where no one dead has yet been placed'.³⁵ Moreover those who, up to the end, are foreigners to Christ and strangers to God doubtlessly say consequently: 'We are buried' with foreigners in the field 'of the potter', the worker with clay, which was acquired with the price 'of blood', and we are in the field which is called 'the field of blood'.

But since what the evangelist says after these words ('Then was fulfilled what had been said by Jeremiah the prophet saying' what has been written), is not found anywhere in the prophetic books of Jeremiah, either in those read in the churches or used by the Jews, if anyone knows where it has been written let him show us. But I suspect either that Jeremiah has been written for Zechariah in error, or it is written in some secret writing of Jeremiah. Now there is such a text in the prophecy of Zechariah: 'And I will say to them, If it is good in your sight, give me my wage, or deny it; and they fixed my wage at thirty pieces of

³³ See Jn 2:15, 16. Greek fragment: But consider if it is because he understood something greater about the Saviour that he threw the silver there.

³⁴ See Eph 2:12.

³⁵ See Rom 6:4; Mt 27:60; Lk 23:53.

silver. And the Lord said to me, Deposit them in the furnace and see if it is genuine, just as I have been approved before them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and placed them in the house of the Lord in the furnace.³⁶ But if anyone thinks he has been offended when I say this, let him beware lest this is prophesied somewhere in secret writings of Jeremiah knowing that the apostle also mentions writings of secret things, as he says somewhere, 'What eye has not seen nor ear heard'; for this is found written in no common book, but in the secret writings of the prophet Elijah. Likewise, what he says, 'As Jamnes and Mambres resisted Moses', is not found in books used for public reading, but in a secret book which has the inscription, the book of Jamnes and Mambres.³⁷ This is why some have dared to reject the epistle to Timothy as if it contains a text of secret writing, but they were not able. But it has never reached my ears that anyone has rejected the first epistle to the Corinthians as if it were not genuine because of this reference.

118 'And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Are you king of the Jews? Jesus says to him: You say it.'³⁸

Truly Jesus 'did not think it robbery to be equal to God', and not once, but frequently he humbled himself before men.³⁹ And now, therefore, 'having been appointed judge of every creature' by the Father, the king of kings and lord of lords, behold to what an extent he humiliated himself, that he should acquiesce to stand before the governor of the land of Judaea at that time, and when he had been summoned he was subjected to a question that Pilate asked, perhaps mocking or doubting, saying, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'⁴⁰ He responded to this question because he considered it to be appropriate and said, 'You say it'. When he was adjured by the chief priest to say if he was the Christ the Son of God, he responded, 'You have said it'. But when he was asked by Pilate, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' he responds, 'You say it'. Consider the questions. Was not that question, 'If you are the Christ the Son of God', appropriate for a Jewish person? For a Roman judge, however, who now asks a question it is not, Are you the Christ, but, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Now the person who carefully considers the precise details of the language of the Gospels will see that the chief priest indeed said with doubt, 'If you are the Christ the Son of God' (for the syllable 'if' shows the doubt in the question), but Pilate said affirmatively: You are the king of the Jews.⁴¹ But since Pilate said this affirmatively, it also confirms what he inscribed elsewhere in the title, 'King of

³⁶ Zech 11:12-13 (LXX).

³⁷ See 1 Cor 2:9; 2 Tim 3:8.

³⁸ Mt 27:11.

³⁹ Phil 2:6. Greek fragment: Jesus is quietly intimating 'yes', since he is king of all humanity, when he says, 'You say it'.

⁴⁰ Greek fragment: Since he had been delivered on a public charge, Pilate asks him saying, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' You shall investigate if he asked in this way mocking or being in doubt.

⁴¹ Greek fragment: ... Since, on the one hand the chief priest asked uncertainly, saying, 'Tell us, if you are the Christ', but Pilate spoke categorically.

the Jews' written in three languages, 'Hebrew, Greek, and Latin,' so that the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans might be aware that Pilate too knew that he was king of the Jews. For this reason, it is clear how respectfully he inquired of Jesus and appealed to the people to ask that Jesus be released rather than Barabbas. It was also a sign of Pilate's respect that he washed his hands and said, 'I am innocent of this blood; you shall see to it'. But the fact that he said to the chief priest, 'You have said it', proves that he is indirectly censuring his uncertainty, and that he says to Pilate, 'You say it' confirms the judgement expressed in his proclamation. Mark writes, however, 'Are you the Son of the blessed one?' prior to the words, 'If you are the Christ the Son of God'. If the copies do not contain an error, I do not know whether it is this one which is written straightforwardly, or that one which is written with uncertainty, since both ought to say equally, 'If you are', or both, 'You are'.

119 'And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders of the people he made no response. Then Pilate says to him, Do you not hear how great the charges are they are bringing against you? And he did not answer a single word to him, so that the governor marvelled greatly.'⁴²

The Jews are the ministers of the letter that kills⁴³ and the elders are the sons of those priests and elders who accused Jesus. They continue their indictment and accuse Jesus right up to the present moment. Consequently, the sin itself continues among them and simultaneously precedes them as 'wrath to the end'. They still suffer the same results, forsaken with the whole people, 'like a booth in a vineyard, and a hut in a cucumber field, and a city that has been captured'.⁴⁴ And just as Jesus did not respond when he was accused then, so also now he makes no response against the accusations of those priests and elders.⁴⁵ For the Word of God does not speak to them, and even now they do not hear the Word of God, as happened formerly in relation to the prophets, and at the end of the ages 'he was made flesh and dwelt among us'.⁴⁶ And it was not only 'to the chief priests and elders of the people' who brought false accusations that 'he did not respond'.⁴⁷ Neither did he respond to Pilate when he wanted to hear him defend himself against their lying accusations. For he made no response when 'Pilate said to him', after the accusations of the chief priests and elders, 'Do you not hear how great the charges are they are bringing against you?' For it was not suitable for Jesus to respond to one who doubted whether he ought to answer their false accusations.⁴⁸

We say this, not unmindful that it is said of Pilate that he actually had some beneficent impulse towards Christ (for this is shown to be true of Pilate in

⁴² Mt 27:12-14.

⁴³ See 2 Cor 3:6.

⁴⁴ See 1 Thess 2:16; Is 1:8.

⁴⁵ For the remainder of this section, cf. *CCels* Prol 2.

⁴⁶ See Heb 1:1, 2; Jn 1:14.

⁴⁷ Greek fragment: Because of their obstinacy he made no reply to them.

⁴⁸ Greek fragment: And he was correct not to answer Pilate because he was in doubt whether he needed to defend himself against the unjust charges and because his opinion about him was divided.

every story about him). But no one will dare say that his judgement on Christ was firm and steadfast. For Pilate was being pulled in opposite directions; and even now the Lord 'does not respond' to him when he is being pulled to the more detrimental view, even though he despised everything they had said in their accusation of him. Pilate was amazed at his steadfastness, perhaps because he knew how, though he might have been able to produce an explanation that would dismiss the charge, he does not respond to the accusers.⁴⁹ He was amazed to see Jesus standing tranquil, with the quiet dignity of wisdom, untroubled by the trial that those present thought put him in danger of death.⁵⁰ He was stronger than human nature and everyone who wanted to weaken the power of his spirit by means of his physical weakness, but was unable to do this. But these words that Pilate not only marvelled but marvelled 'greatly' prompt me to suppose that it seemed to Pilate to be on the level of a great marvel that Christ, although delivered to a criminal trial, remains undisturbed as he stands before death, a thing all people hold to be frightening.

120 'Now on that solemn day it was the governor's practice to release to the people one prisoner whom they wished'.⁵¹

You should not be surprised if the Roman commander-in-chief who now rules them, has granted to the Jews, who recently took on the yoke of the Romans, that on the solemn day of the Passover they might request 'anyone they wished'; however many thousands of homicides he appeared to have committed.⁵² For in this way the Gentiles offer certain gifts to those whom they subject, until their yoke on them is confirmed. Nevertheless, this custom of a prisoner being absolved was sometimes also practised among the Jews. For when Saul had decreed that no one should take food, but Jonathan had tasted a honeycomb contrary to the king's decree, he found Jonathan guilty and, although he was his son, nevertheless because of some oath of his, he decided to kill him, but he did not kill him because the whole people of Israel intervened and petitioned for him to live.⁵³

But the fact that Pilate released 'one prisoner to the people', or that Saul released Jonathan in conformity with the petition of the people is not surprising, for the lives of both being demanded were at fault, since the Jews were

⁴⁹ Klostermann's suggestion to fill a lacuna.

⁵⁰ Greek fragment: For it was obvious that if he had spoken in his own defence and argued that he was guilty of no charge, the judge would have released him, having taken the path of the good things declared about him. For this reason, also the governor 'marveled' at him, how, although he could have said many things in his defense, he was silent, and he did not simply marvel, but even 'very much'. Perhaps he marveled because of his indifferent and untroubled attitude towards death and the calmness of his face among them and his forbearance on behalf of humanity.

⁵¹ Mt 27:15.

⁵² Greek fragment: Probably, since the Jews now have a treaty with the Romans, the one who has been shown favour by them is granted during the feast.

⁵³ 1 Kgs 14:24, 27, 42-5. Greek fragment: But also, when Saul acquiesced to the people in regard to Jonathan, it shows that such was hereditary among them.

always liable to punishment. But let us ask if something like this might happen also in the judgement of God, that the whole church could petition for some sinner to be released from the condemnation of sin, and especially if, even though he might have committed other works deserving damnation, he is active in doing good for the church. You will often find such people among those who are in power, who are sinners in other respects, but who do as much for Christians as they possibly can. But you will be lead even more to investigate if there is a sufficient reason that even Israel prayed to God 'for the life of Nebuchadnezzar' and his son Belshazzar.⁵⁴ If this appears worthy of investigation to anyone, he will look into it. What is evident, however, is that we should try our utmost to belong to those who pray and belong to the order of those who have lived correctly rather than those who are prayed for, because they are evil people. Even if some sinner should submit to the prayers of the church, it is not right that a person of this kind attains glory and blessedness. It is sufficient that he be released from punishment.

But I think it was because of that solemn day of the Jews on which Barabbas was chosen to live and Christ was despised that the Lord says through the prophet, 'My soul hates your fasts and festival days and solemn days.'⁵⁵ And because they wished to perform a greater solemnity with the thief who was released than with Jesus, I would say, for example, if they had celebrated their solemnity correctly, as Josias or anyone like him did,⁵⁶ and he had given them the one they wished when they were seeking freedom, they would doubtless have requested Jesus and condemned Barabbas. And let us pray that when honouring a solemn day, 'not with the old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth', we condemn Barabbas, and deserve to receive Jesus to ourselves, free from all bonds, as our king and Lord.⁵⁷ And because we do this, our solemn days will not be turned into mourning, nor our songs into lamentation, but they will be true solemnities among us, solemnities of God.

121 'Now at that time they had a notorious prisoner who was called Barabbas. Therefore, when they were gathered together Pilate said to them, Whom do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that they had delivered him because of envy'.⁵⁸

Many copies do not contain the phrase that says that 'Barabbas' was also called 'Jesus', and perhaps correctly, so that the name Jesus does not apply to any unjust person.⁵⁹ For in so great a multitude of Scriptures we know no

⁵⁴ See Bar 1:11.

⁵⁵ See Is 1:13, 14.

⁵⁶ See 4 Kgs 23:22-5.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor 5:8.

⁵⁸ Mt 27:16-18.

⁵⁹ The Greek fragment suggests that Origen's remark was contrary to what the translator has: But when I read very old copies I discovered that Barabbas himself is also called Jesus. Pilate's question, indeed, considers it such there: 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?'

sinner named Jesus. In the case of other names of just people we find that unjust people also have the same name. Take, for example, Judas; there was the apostle called the zealot, likewise Judas the patriarch, and Judas Macca-bees, all praiseworthy people, but there was also Judas the betrayer. In Genesis, you will also find sons of Seth and sons of Cain with the same name, such as Enoch, Lamech, and Methuselah.⁶⁰ But no such thing was appropriate with the name Jesus. I think that something such as this has been added among the heresies that they might have some agreement to mention in their fables about the similarity of the name Jesus and Barabbas. For I think that some mysterious matter is indicated in those names, namely that Barabbas had been appointed in the souls of people to cause sedition, wars, and murders, but Jesus, as Son of God, had been appointed to cause peace, reason, and wisdom, for all good things. When, therefore, these two had been imprisoned in human affairs and bodies, people requested Barabbas to be released to them. This is why that race does not cease having seditions, murders, and robberies in relation to some of their race in affairs that are considered external; but internally, in the soul, they relate to all Jews who do not believe in Jesus. For where Jesus is not present, there you have seditions, disputes, and fights; but where Jesus is present, so that they can say, 'But if Christ is' in us 'the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, but the spirit is' life 'because of righteousness'. All good things are present there simultaneously; innumerable spiritual riches and peace are in his hands, 'for he is our peace, who has made both one'.⁶¹ And if someone should see the contrary at work, let him know that Barabbas, whom they want to be released, is prisoner in notorious people, not only when Israel according to the flesh sinned at that time, but also when all who are like Israel in doctrine or life sin. Therefore, Barabbas has been released in the body of whoever does evil, and Christ is imprisoned; but Christ has been released in the person who does good and Barabbas is imprisoned.

122 'But as he was sitting on the judgement seat his wife sent to him saying, Let there be nothing between you and that just man, for I have suffered many things today in a vision because of him'.⁶²

Jesus had, indeed, been delivered because of envy, and because of such obvious envy that even Pilate was not unaware of it.⁶³ But the evangelist did not want to omit the matter of divine providence which involves the praise of God who wished to convert Pilate's wife through the vision so that so far as she was able she might prevent her husband from pronouncing sentence against Jesus.⁶⁴ Matthew did not explain the vision but said only that she had 'suffered many things in a vision because of' Jesus. She 'suffered in a vision', therefore, so

⁶⁰ See Gen 4:17-18; 5:6-25.

⁶¹ Rom 8:10; Eph 2:14.

⁶² Mt 27:19.

⁶³ Greek fragment: For it was also clear to Pilate that he had been delivered out of envy.

⁶⁴ Greek fragment: But above all, the dream was a work of providence.

that she not suffer more.⁶⁵ Consequently, we might say that Pilate's wife had been blessed; she 'suffered many things in a vision because of' Jesus and received 'in the vision' what she would have suffered.⁶⁶ On this basis someone will dare say that it is better that someone receive evil in a vision than receive it in life. For who would not choose to receive his evils 'in a vision' than receive them in his life (unless perhaps he deserved such things that it would be expedient for him to receive more severe things in his life rather than receiving easier things in a vision)? For he who receives evil things in his life (and not these evil things he receives in his vision) is comforted and rests 'in the bosom of Abraham' and, accordingly, will have comfort. But whether she may also have the beginning of conversion to God because she had 'suffered many things because of' Jesus 'in a vision,' God knows. Nevertheless, certain writings that are not in common contain even this. And notice (because Pilate's wife called Jesus 'just') whether this wife of Pilate might not be a symbol of the church from the Gentiles, who at one time indeed was ruled by Pilate, but now is no longer under him because of its faith in Christ.⁶⁷

123 'But the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said to them: Which of the two do you want me to release to you? And they said: Barabbas.'⁶⁸

It is possible to this day to see how the Jewish people were persuaded and stirred up against Jesus by their elders and the teachers of the Jewish religion so that they might destroy him (so far as that was possible for them) and have Barabbas released, for the masses believe their rulers and priests. 'The governor,' indeed, said repeatedly to the people, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' The masses, however, as true masses and multitudes that walk 'the broad way that leads to destruction,'⁶⁹ ask that Barabbas be released, wishing to have him released in themselves.

124 'Pilate says to them, What, then, shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? They all say: Let him be crucified', and the rest.⁷⁰

'Pilate,' wishing to produce the shame of such great injustice in them, 'says' to them: 'What, then, shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' But not only that, he also wished to bring the enormity of their impiety into focus. But they 'all' said, 'Let him be crucified', neither being ashamed of the fact that Pilate confessed Jesus to be 'Christ', nor preserving any limit of impiety. It would still have been a great impiety because they had abandoned a just man and asked

⁶⁵ Greek fragment: What the dream was is not said, but it reveals that it was not shown so that Jesus might not suffer, but that the wife might be saved.

⁶⁶ Greek fragment: And blessed is she who receives her suffering in full in dreams so that she not experience greater suffering.

⁶⁷ Greek fragment: And you will investigate if she is a symbol of the church from the Gentiles once ruled by Pilate and no longer subject to him because of faith in Christ, for she is a foreigner.

⁶⁸ Mt 27:20-1.

⁶⁹ See Mt 7:13.

⁷⁰ Mt 27:22-6.

for a murderer, if they had asked him to set Barabbas free, but not also demanded the cross for Christ, for example, if they had asked that Barabbas be released but had not asked that this man be crucified but had left him to Pilate's authority to do what he wished about him. But now they have multiplied the enormity of their impiety by not only asking that a murderer might live, but also asking for death for a just man, and for the most shameful death on a cross.⁷¹ But persisting on that very point, because he wished to disconcert them so that, disconcerted, they might perhaps come to the choice of the just man (although not based on the judgement of their heart), he says to them: 'Why, what evil has he committed?' Since they have nothing against him that they might give as an answer, 'they cried out even more', not putting aside, but increasing their anger, animosity and blasphemy,⁷² 'and said: Let him be crucified'.

'And Pilate, seeing that he gained nothing', employed a Jewish custom in his desire to appease them if they were willing, not only with words but also with an action itself, about the innocence of Christ, and if they were unwilling, to condemn them. He does something that does not follow any Roman custom; 'he takes water in the sight' of all, 'and washing his hands, he said: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; you shall see to it'.⁷³ And he indeed washed; but they not only had no wish to be clean of the blood of Christ; they even took it upon themselves saying, 'His blood is on us and on our children'. For this reason, they were made guilty not only of the blood of the prophets, but filling up the measure of their fathers, they were made guilty also of the blood of Christ, so that they hear God saying to them, 'When you spread out your hands to me, I will turn my eyes away from you; for your hands are full of blood'.⁷⁴ Therefore, the blood of Jesus has been imputed not only to those who were alive at that time, but also to every subsequent generation of Jews up to the consummation. Therefore, to the present time, their house has been abandoned to them empty. But Pilate, forgetting his own good words with which he began to defend the innocence of Christ, turns aside to evil and not only 'hands Jesus over', but also 'when he had scourged him, handed him over that they might crucify him'.

125 'Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort to him. They put a scarlet robe on him and placed purple around him, and they put a crown of thorns on his head and a reed in his right hand, and bowing down, they mocked him saying, Hail, king of the Jews.'⁷⁵

It is likely that (at that time at the beginning of the recently established Roman imperium) when they took Jesus 'into the praetorium and gathered

⁷¹ See Phil 2:8.

⁷² See Col 3:8.

⁷³ Greek fragment: Because Pilate said the Savior was a just man, he performed this action to satisfy his conscience. Contrary to present customs of the Romans, he washed his hands, acting in conformity with Jewish custom.

⁷⁴ Is 1:15.

⁷⁵ Mt 27:27-9.

the whole cohort to him' and did what they are said to have done, making sport of Jesus because he had been called 'king of the Jews', soldiers not yet observing the proper order of discipline, acted towards the Saviour outside the proper practice of discipline that now exists.⁷⁶ In my opinion, however, the soldiers did this because the invisible kings and rulers of this age were working in them. It was those who 'stood beside one another and gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ',⁷⁷ so that that mockery should be seen as theirs rather than of the men—but theirs who did not know the wisdom of God in that dispensation, 'for if they had known it they would never have crucified the Lord of glory'.⁷⁸ That cohort, therefore, was a symbol of some wicked army.

'And they stripped him of his garments' that he had, a tunic seamless from the top and a robe (for John describes his garments to be such),⁷⁹ 'and they put a scarlet robe on him' (mocking him because of his royal title) not understanding what they were doing.⁸⁰ For that scarlet robe was a symbol of the scarlet sign that is recorded in Joshua, that Rahab had for her salvation, and a symbol of what was done to the hand of one of the sons of Tamar in Genesis as he was born, namely that scarlet was bound to his hand as a sign of the future passion of Christ. Therefore, even now when the Lord takes the 'scarlet robe' on himself he took on the blood of the world, and with that thorny crown he took on the thorns of our sins plaited on his head.⁸¹ And it is written of the robe that they again 'stripped him of the scarlet robe', but the evangelists have written nothing like this about the thorny crown. This is why I think they wanted us to ask about the conclusion of the matter of the thorny crown put on once for all and never removed. I think, therefore, that that thorny crown was taken up completely by the head of Jesus so that now our ancient thorns do not exist, after Jesus once and for all removed them from us on his own venerable head.⁸²

But if it is also appropriate to say something about the reed that they placed 'in his right hand', we explain it as follows. That 'reed', therefore, was a symbol of the vain and fragile sceptre on which we all used to lean before we believed, a wicked sceptre; for we used to trust in the reed sceptre of Egypt or Babylon

⁷⁶ Greek fragment: Now it is likely that at the beginning of the Roman rule the military profession did not yet have a proper order, for which reason, contrary to Roman customs, the cohort gathers together against him and does what is written, doing these things mockingly because they heard that he was a king. But you will investigate if the cohort is a symbol of the host of wickedness, and if these things were being done by invisible rulers who did not know the divine plan.

⁷⁷ Ps 2:2.

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 2:8. Greek fragment: 'For', the apostle says, 'if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory'.

⁷⁹ See Jn 19:23. As it stands in Klostermann's text, this could be rendered, 'his garments', which he had from above, a seamless tunic and robe. I think the adverb *desursum*, 'from above', is misplaced in the text and should modify the adjective as I have translated it. Jn 19:23 suggests this, where it modifies 'woven'.

⁸⁰ Greek fragment: Not knowing what they were doing.

⁸¹ Greek fragment: And the 'crown of thorns' is the sins which are united by the cares of life.

⁸² Greek fragment: Which he, as God, destroys on his own head.

or of some other kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God.⁸³ And he took that 'reed' and sceptre of a fragile kingdom from our hands that he might lead it in triumphal procession and crush it on the wood of the cross.⁸⁴ And for that prior reed on which we used to recline, he gives us the sceptre of the heavenly kingdom and the rod of which it is written, 'the rod of your kingdom is a rod of equity';⁸⁵ or a rod that rebukes those who need rebuking, of which the apostle says, 'What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod?'⁸⁶ He also gives us a staff so that we may celebrate the Passover in accordance with what is written, 'Your staffs are in your hands,'⁸⁷ so that we might celebrate the Passover putting aside that sceptre of reed that we used to have before we celebrated the Passover of the Lord. And they strike the venerable 'head' of Jesus with this fragile and vain reed, because that hostile kingdom always reviles and strikes God the Father, the 'head' of our Lord and Saviour.⁸⁸ And in all these things the only begotten excellence was not harmed since he did not suffer anything when he was made 'a curse for us,'⁸⁹ although he is a blessing by nature; but since he is a blessing, he destroyed, dissolved, and demolished every human curse.

126 'But going out they found a man of Cyrene named Simon; this man they compelled to carry his cross.'⁹⁰

Just as Jesus was tempted by the devil according to the three evangelists, but according to John (who made his discourse of a spiritual nature) he was not tempted—for 'the truth and the life' and 'the resurrection' and 'the true light' are not tempted,⁹¹ but he was tempted in relation to the human being that the only begotten God had taken up—so according to John, at least, the Saviour 'went out to the place that is called the place of Calvary bearing his own cross' when those who had taken him placed it on him. According to the others, however, he did not bear it himself.⁹² For 'those who were taking him off to be crucified' 'went out and found' a certain man 'of Cyrene named Simon' whom they compelled to take up the cross' of Christ.⁹³ But not only was it fit that the Saviour take up his cross, but it was also fit for us to bear it, fulfilling our service of salvation. But we will not again be so benefited when we accept his cross, as we are benefited now by his cross when he both accepts it and bears it. But if both happened literally and the evangelists are not in disagreement with one another, you will ask which happened first.⁹⁴ For either before they

⁸³ See Is 36:6.

⁸⁴ See Col 2:15.

⁸⁵ Ps 44:7.

⁸⁶ 1 Cor 4:21.

⁸⁷ Ex 12:11.

⁸⁸ See 1 Cor 11:3.

⁸⁹ Gal 3:13.

⁹⁰ Mt 27:32.

⁹¹ See Jn 14:6; 11:25; 1:9.

⁹² Greek fragment: According to the three, Simon took up the cross of Jesus and bore it, but according to John Jesus bore it himself.

⁹³ See Mt 27:31, 32.

⁹⁴ Greek fragment: But you will investigate if both happened literally, and what was first, whether Jesus carried the cross at the end or Simon; for it is likely that since no one wanted to bear the cross, Jesus first carried it from within, but on the way they placed it on Simon, who was not compelled at random, but had been previously appointed by God to serve the cross of Jesus, in which 'the world has been crucified' to the saints 'and' the saints 'to the world' (see Gal 6:14).

requisitioned 'Simon of Cyrene', first those who were taking Jesus to be crucified placed the cross on him so that, 'bearing it' he might go out 'to the place of Calvary' or, they placed the cross on Simon that he might carry it to the place where they were going to suspend Jesus on it. And let the person who can carry out an examination investigate the matter by examining each option, so that he might discover whether Jesus received the final stage of bearing the cross or if it was Simon of Cyrene. He had not been fortuitously requisitioned, but in accordance with some foreknowledge of God about him, he had been brought to this place by God's arrangement so that the Gospel writing might be found to be worthy also in its service of the cross of Christ, in which 'the world has been crucified' to the saints 'and' the saints 'to the world'.⁹⁵

But some want to explain this 'Simon of Cyrene' in a moral way because Cyrene in Libya belongs to the Pentapolis.⁹⁶ They take their point of departure from the five senses so that they may say that the five senses, as it were, carried the cross of that dispensation. But the name Simon is interpreted to mean 'Obedience', and what might more appropriately bear the cross of Christ than obedience, or Simeon (as Lia's second son was named).⁹⁷ For both the patriarch and Peter have a double name with the Greeks (in accordance with the peculiarity of the Hebrew word), so that it is appropriate for him who is thus named to be called both Simon and Simeon, since the Hebrews write both the name Simeon and Simon with the very same letters. But the 'place of Calvary' is said not to have any expansive meaning whatever, so that he who was to die for humanity died there. For some such tradition has reached me that the body of Adam, the first man, was buried there where Christ was crucified so that 'just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive'; so that at that place, 'which is called the place of Calvary, that is the place of the head; the head of the human race found resurrection with all people through the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, who suffered there and arose'.⁹⁸ For it was not proper that when the many who had been born from him received the remission of sins and obtained the benefit of the resurrection, the father of all humanity himself should not even more obtain grace of this kind.

127 'And they gave him vinegar mixed with gall to drink; and when he had tasted it, he did not drink.'⁹⁹

⁹⁵ See note 94.

⁹⁶ That is, five cities. Greek fragment: But since Cyrene belongs to the Pentapolis they say that figuratively the senses bore the cross of the dispensation.

⁹⁷ See Gen 29:33. Greek fragment: And since Simon is interpreted to mean 'Obedience', the one named after obedience carries it.

⁹⁸ See 1 Cor 15:22. Greek fragment: 'It has come to me concerning the place of the skull that the Hebrews hand down that the body of Adam has been buried there, so that, since we all die in Adam, Adam, on the one hand might arise, but on the other we may all be made alive in Christ'. Jerome refers to such a tradition in his *Commentary on Ephesians* (see Heine [2002] 222-4), as does Epiphanius, *Panarion* 46.5.1-8, who says it was a view of Tatian.

⁹⁹ Mt 27:34.

It was sufficient for us that he only tasted it. Just as he tasted death no longer than three days, so also the 'vinegar mixed with gall'. But he took other wine, not 'mixed' with 'gall' or any other dangerous substance and drank, and 'when he had given thanks' he gave it to his disciples and promised that he would drink 'it new in the kingdom' of God.¹⁰⁰

128 'And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments among themselves by casting lots; and sitting down, they watched him.'¹⁰¹

To this day there are copies that do not have this exact statement, but have 'garments', the words having been added to the Scriptures, not in their completeness but partially, nevertheless the prophet utters this very mystery which has now been fulfilled.¹⁰² But we do not read in the three evangelists whether some part of his garments had been torn in that division or each single piece of them remained whole just as it was, and what kind of garments they were. In John, however, we learn that 'after the soldiers had crucified Christ, they took his garments and made four parts, a part for each soldier. But because the tunic did not have a seam, but was woven throughout from above, they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it.'¹⁰³ They all, therefore, did not receive it, but the one who won the throw. But someone examining the diversity of those copies which have 'garments' of the Lord will discover without doubt those which although they do not have the word itself in their teachings, nevertheless have 'tunic' woven from above 'throughout', but others not the tunic itself but some small part of his garments. And consider this: according to Matthew Jesus received and tasted 'vinegar mixed with gall', but according to Mark, when 'wine mixed with myrrh' was given 'to him' 'he did not receive it'.¹⁰⁴

129 'And sitting down, they watched him there.'¹⁰⁵

The soldiers watched the body of him who had been dispatched by the chief priests, as if it would be stolen by his disciples if it were not watched,¹⁰⁶ but God's divine plan raised him up again and made the witnesses of his resurrection not only two or three, but many more. For 'he was seen by Cephas, and after that by those eleven, then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at the same time', 'and last of all' to Paul.¹⁰⁷ And it was no small sign of his resurrection that he was seen by so many who incurred danger to preach that he was alive among the people who assailed him at the cross. And now the new

¹⁰⁰ See Mt 26:27, 29. ¹⁰¹ Mt 27:35, 36.

¹⁰² The Latin text of this statement is very elliptical, so I have had to supply more than usual based on what I think he must be saying. He seems to be referring to the fact that many MSS of Matthew do not contain the words from Ps 21:19 which are quoted in full in Jn 19:24, and that some MSS have some of the words from that quotation but not all of them.

¹⁰³ Jn 19:23-4.

¹⁰⁴ See Mk 15:23. Greek fragment: For Matthew said that when he tasted the wine with gall he did not wish to drink it, but Mark says he did not taste the wine mixed with myrrh at all.

¹⁰⁵ Mt 27:36.

¹⁰⁶ See Mt 27:64.

¹⁰⁷ See 1 Cor 15:5, 6, 8.

chief priests (of course they are the sons of those chief priests) crucify the word of truth that stands in the Scriptures with their false explanations and kill it with lies. But because the word of truth is killed among them, but lives in its own nature, it always finds and chooses vessels for itself in which it may rise again and live and continue to confound its killers, having been shown to be alive by many testimonies.

130 'And over his head they placed his accusation, written, This is Jesus, king of the Jews.'¹⁰⁸

'Whether in pretext or in truth, Christ is proclaimed'¹⁰⁹ and every language of his kingdom bears witness, whether of the Greeks, the Romans, or the Hebrews. It was written 'over his head' for a crown: 'This is Jesus, king of the Jews'. And since no other reason for his death was found (for there was none) this alone was used, that he was 'king of the Jews', of which also it had been said, 'But I was appointed king by him on Zion, his holy mountain.'¹¹⁰ Now the chief priest, according to the letter of the law, wore a kind of sign on his head, 'Holiness of the Lord', written on a leaf of metal;¹¹¹ but Jesus, the true chief priest and king, has written on his cross: 'This is the king of the Jews'. But by ascending and submitting to the Father, he has the Father in himself instead of letters and a name which is named, and he has him as a crown having been made worthy of him, and having made the things of the house of God the Father worthy, he alone can sufficiently receive the Father.

131 'Then they crucified two thieves with him, one on the right and one on the left.'¹¹²

The Lord was crucified between thieves as indeed the thieves themselves fulfilled the prophecy that says of him, 'And he was reckoned among the unjust.'¹¹³ And it is possible to see his disciples, 'reckoned with the unjust' and crucified with them or enduring the sufferings which remain,¹¹⁴ just as those did also, when they bear testimony to the worship of God he introduced. For the world and the spirit that is in it always persecutes the best people and maliciously punishes the best for the profit of the multitudes, because the world is not worthy of the most virtuous people who do not consider 'the things that are seen', but 'those that are not seen', and despise the world, just as the saints once walked about 'in sheepskins and in goatskins, in need, afflicted, wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in caves and pits of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy.'¹¹⁵

132 'And passing through, they were blaspheming him, shaking their heads and saying: Ha, you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, free yourself. If you are the Son of God descend from the cross. In a similar way, the

¹⁰⁸ Mt 27:37.

¹⁰⁹ Phil 1:18.

¹¹⁰ Ps 2:6.

¹¹¹ See Ex 28:32 (LXX).

¹¹² Mt 27:38.

¹¹³ Is 53:12.

¹¹⁴ See Col 1:24.

¹¹⁵ See Heb 11:38; 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:37, 38.

chief priests mocked him with the scribes, the elders, and the Pharisees and said: He saved others; he cannot save himself; if he is the king of Israel, let him descend now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, he will free him now if he wants him, for he said, I am the Son of God.¹¹⁶

No one who stands firm or walks correctly blasphemes Jesus. For 'passing through, they were blaspheming him' [or 'passing by' as it is in the Greek text],¹¹⁷ who also, when the wall of the vineyard had been destroyed by God, were picking those grapes that remained; for it is written: 'Why did you bring down its wall, and all who pass by on the way pick its grapes?'¹¹⁸ Therefore, inasmuch as one does not pass by on the way, or turn aside from it, or standing firm does not blaspheme Jesus, he can say to God, You have set 'my feet on a rock'. But if he has fallen, or passed by, or passed through, or turned aside, then he blasphemes him. So it is still that those who have fallen into evil works and have forsaken 'the eternal boundaries' and the way of the heavenly church are tossed and carried about 'by every wind of doctrine in the deceitfulness of men, with shrewdness for the cure of error'.¹¹⁹ For if someone should say that all heresies are 'passing by' and turning aside, he would not make a mistake because they too fall among those who 'are passing by' and they blaspheme Jesus since they do not hold their head firm, but 'move' it up and down, because they are not sensible nor do they have their eyes in their head, where they ought to have them as Ecclesiastes says, 'The eyes of the wise man are in his head'.¹²⁰ Therefore, it is the work of those passing by and turning aside to blaspheme Jesus, the Son of God, because 'no one speaking in the Spirit of God says: Jesus be cursed'.¹²¹

But diverse words are uttered by those blaspheming. Their one blasphemy is what is said by those who do not understand nor hear what was being said or what they were making affirmations about, for Jesus said, 'Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days'.¹²² But those 'passing by' as 'false witnesses' against Jesus were saying what he had not said, assailing him with the words, 'Ha, he who destroyed the temple of God, and in three days rebuilds it'. He did not destroy the temple. Instead, he builds what others destroyed, whether 'the temple of his own body',¹²³ which the Jews had delivered to death, or the temple of their witnesses and of all those who had the Word of God in themselves and were put to death for their piety by the plots of the impious (for 'the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God and will arise'¹²⁴). And they lied not only when they said, 'He who destroyed the temple', but also when they said, 'And I will rebuild it in three days'. For he did not speak of himself rebuilding the temple, but of 'raising it up', for the word 'rebuild' does not indicate an unexpected work, but the word 'raise up' does.

¹¹⁶ Mt 27:39-43.¹¹⁷ A comment added by the ancient translator.¹¹⁸ Ps 79:13.¹¹⁹ See Prov 22:28; Eph 4:14.¹²⁰ Eccl 2:14.¹²¹ 1 Cor 12:3.¹²² Jn 2:19.¹²³ See Jn 2:21.¹²⁴ See Jn 5:28, 29.

And those who were laughing at him were saying, 'Save yourself'; but he (receiving power from the Father) did both this and more, for he shows his salvation to all who receive his word. And those mockers indeed were saying, 'If you are the Son of God, descend from the cross'. He did not, however, show himself as Son of God to the mockers, but he shows himself such to those who believe in him, once he had dispensed with those things he had to dispense with in those three days. After descending to Hades 'when he had been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, he preached to the spirits that were in prison who had not believed when the patience of God was awaited in the days of Noah when the ark was being constructed, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved by water'.¹²⁵ And he was not abandoned there (just as he himself said: 'You will not abandon my soul in Hades'¹²⁶), but he had also to ascend to his own Father and God, so that, 'ascending on high' he took captivity captive and received 'gifts among men,' and after these things he might show himself stronger than death when he says to it, 'Death, where is your sting?'¹²⁷

'And in the same way' (while others were passing by and blaspheming him) 'the chief priests also and the scribes' were passing by and 'were saying' to him, as they had been surpassed by the miracles previously displayed by him, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself' (of course they do not believe that he who had been able to save 'others' would have been even more able to save 'himself'), and they were promising to believe 'in him' themselves as king 'of Israel' if they were to see him descending 'from the cross'. But he did not attempt to perform anything unworthy prompted by their mocking insult and do what they were saying which was unreasonable and out of place.

133 'And the thieves, too, who were crucified with him, reproached him in the same way'.¹²⁸

As we were able, we explained about the two thieves who were crucified with Christ in our study of John.¹²⁹ According to Matthew and Mark, both thieves reproached him on the cross, but according to Luke, 'one of the thieves hanging blasphemed him saying: You are Christ; save yourself and us, but the other responded and rebuked him saying, Do you not fear God, because you share in the same condemnation? But we, indeed, justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but he has done nothing evil'.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ 1 Pet 3:18–20.

¹²⁶ Ps 15:10.

¹²⁷ See Eph 4:8; 1 Cor 15:55.

¹²⁸ Mt 27:44.

¹²⁹ See Jn 19:18. This appears to be a reference to the *ComJn*. The books of that *Commentary* that have been preserved, however, reach only the thirteenth chapter of John's Gospel. There are also no fragments from chapter 19 preserved, and the only reference given to Jn 19:18 in Origen's works in *Biblia Patristica* is to the present passage. See Heine (forthcoming b).

¹³⁰ See Mk 15:32; Lk 23:39–41. Greek fragment: Matthew, on the one hand, giving it a cursory treatment, said that those who were crucified with him also reproached him, but this author more accurately, as he also announced (Lk 1:3), setting it out in full says that there was one who blasphemed, but the other honoured him.

And he said to Jesus, Remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus answered and said to him who reproached the blasphemer, 'Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'¹³¹ Therefore, it is proper that at first both thieves are understood to have blasphemed the Lord, but after this, one of them was converted and believed, taking thought of the miracles which he heard Jesus had performed, but perhaps also because he saw the change in the atmosphere and the unusual darkness that occurred, which did not often happen.¹³² Or, by chance, as we also said there,¹³³ these two thieves, one of whom blasphemed him but the other reproached the blasphemer, are one group, and the other was those two thieves who both blasphemed. But that thief who was saved can be a symbol of those who, after many iniquities, have believed in Christ and said: I have been crucified with Christ and conformed to his death. These always say to the Son of God: 'Remember' us 'when you come into your kingdom', and therefore, they are with him in 'paradise'.¹³⁴

134 'But from the sixth hour there was darkness on the whole earth until the ninth hour'.¹³⁵

On the basis of this text someone challenges the truth of the Gospel, saying, How can the statement in the text be true, that 'there was darkness on the whole earth from the sixth hour until the ninth', since no historical work relates the event? And they say that an eclipse of the sun occurred then just as it normally occurs in an eclipse of the sun. And from all eternity an eclipse of the sun has always occurred at its right time. But an eclipse of the sun which normally occurs in accordance with the customary manner of the revolving seasons, occurs at no other time than at the concurrence of the sun and moon, when the moon, running below, obstructs the rays of the sun and, in its concurrence, weakens its light.¹³⁶ It is clear, however, that there was no concurrence of the moon with the sun at the time Christ suffered, for it was the time of the Pass-over which is customarily held when the moon has the full power of the sun and is full at night. How, then, could an eclipse of the sun occur when the moon was full and had the full power of the sun?

¹³¹ Lk 23:43.

¹³² Greek fragment: Now it is likely that at the beginning both reproached him, but later the one changed to believe in him, both calling to mind the signs that he did and seeing the atmosphere beginning to grow dark.

¹³³ Perhaps in the *Com/n*? See n. 129 above.

¹³⁴ See Gal 2:19; Phil 3:10; Lk 23:42, 43. Greek fragment: But see if the thief who is saved is a symbol of those who, after sinning, believe in Jesus and say, I am crucified with Christ, conformed to his death, who also are thought worthy of the sojourn in paradise, because the Lord said, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.'

¹³⁵ Mt 27:45.

¹³⁶ Greek fragment: For an eclipse occurs when these two luminaries approach one another. For an eclipse of the sun occurs when the moon comes into conjunction with it, not at full moon when the sun is diametrically opposed to the moon.

But some believers are constrained by the words of those who put forth such arguments and want to construct the following defence against these assertions: If there had been no new extraordinary event at the time of Christ's passion, but all things continued as usual, it would be believed that that eclipse of the sun occurred in the normal way. But now, since it is well known that other extraordinary events that happened at that time did not happen in ordinary ways, but were new and marvellous (for also 'the veil of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and rocks were shattered, and tombs were opened and many bodies of sleeping saints arose'¹³⁷) it is clear that consequently that eclipse of the sun occurred, in accord with the other new extraordinary events, contrary to what was normal. Likewise, 'the sons of this age', who 'are wiser than the sons of light in their generation',¹³⁸ argue to the contrary: Assume that that eclipse of the sun happened outside the normal way at a time not long ago, under the Roman empire, so that there was darkness 'on all the earth until the ninth hour'. How did such a marvellous event occur and no Greek or barbarian wrote about it at that time, especially those who composed chronicles and took note if anywhere some such new thing had happened at any time, but it was only your authors who wrote about this? And a certain Phlegon wrote in his chronicles of an event during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, but he did not indicate that this happened during the full moon.¹³⁹

Consider, then, if this is not a strong objection, capable of moving any wise man (who agrees neither with what this one says nor with what that one writes, but listens to all things rationally and with sound judgement), who also is not obstinate ***¹⁴⁰ and each of the believers (who believes, but not thoughtfully and with sound judgement), might be firm even if the opponents put forward a thousand accusations against the evangelical faith with the desire to destroy our faith, so that the believer is not shaken at all by their arguments. They pretend to believe in the Gospel writings, and on the pretext of one or another question that is difficult or perhaps even unsolvable, turn to the Scriptures and try to remove faith in Christ and his Gospels from our soul by introducing certain moral matters, and to transfer the miracles worked by the power of God to secular customs. I have found it a good thing to take up the worthy cause of those who want to be immoveable in the faith in order to find solutions to the accusations of the accusers in favour of the truth of the Gospel (to the extent that the power of God is with me) so that the believers, and not only those with a simple faith but also those with a rational faith, may be made secure in their faith.

We say, therefore, that Matthew and Mark did not say that an eclipse of the sun occurred at that time, nor did Luke¹⁴¹ who, in the greatest number of

¹³⁷ See Mt 27:51, 52. ¹³⁸ Lk 16:8.

¹³⁹ Greek fragment: And a certain Phlegon, a Greek philosopher, has remembered this darkness, and the rest.

¹⁴⁰ Koetschau identifies a gap here.

¹⁴¹ Greek fragment: Neither Matthew nor Mark mention either the sun or an eclipse, but Luke....

exemplars, has the following words: 'And it was about the sixth hour and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened.' But some exemplars do not have, 'and there was darkness and the sun was darkened,' but instead, 'There was darkness over all the earth when the sun was eclipsed.' Perhaps someone (as if wishing to say something clearer) put 'when the sun was eclipsed' for, 'and the sun was darkened,' thinking that there was no other way that there could have been darkness unless 'the sun was eclipsed'.¹⁴² I think, however, more to the point, that ambushers of Christ's church have altered this statement, namely that 'there was darkness when the sun was eclipsed,' so that they could prove that the Gospels are fictitious, according to the inventions of those wishing to prove those things. I think, therefore, that just as other signs that happened at Christ's passion happened only in Jerusalem, so also the 'darkness' that 'occurred until the ninth hour' was only 'on the whole land' of Judaea.¹⁴³ These are the things I say happened only in Jerusalem: 'the veil of the temple was torn,' 'the earth shook,' 'rocks were shattered,' 'tombs were opened.' For 'rocks were' not 'shattered' outside Judaea, nor 'were' other 'tombs opened' except those alone that were in Jerusalem or perhaps in the land of Judaea, nor did 'the earth shake' at that time except in the region of Jerusalem—for it is not mentioned anywhere that the whole foundation of the earth shook at that time, so that those felt it (for example) who were in Ethiopia, and India, and Scythia (which, if it had happened, would doubtless be found in some historical works of those who recorded anything novel that happened in their chronicles).¹⁴⁴ Therefore, just as the words, 'the land shook' refer here to the land of Jerusalem or (if someone wants to extend it further) to the land of Judaea, so also 'there was darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth over all the land' happened over Judaea or certainly over Jerusalem alone. He who understands it in this way, therefore, understands it correctly. Consequently, because he does not wish to indicate the magnitude of the miracle he incurs the derision of the wise 'of this world'¹⁴⁵ and produces more faithlessness in those wise men than faith.

But someone says against these words, If the 'darkness' at that time 'over all the land' of Judaea and Jerusalem was not the result of an eclipse of the sun but resulted from some other cause, indicate the cause. Our response is: First, there is the fact that the Gospels do not mention the sun at all in that passage, but only say that 'there was darkness over all the land.' If, therefore, 'there was darkness over all the land' when the sun was not mentioned, doubtless it is logical to understand that certain extremely dark clouds, and perhaps not one

¹⁴² See Mk 15:33; Lk 23:44, 45.

¹⁴³ Greek fragment: Just as the land around Judaea, and the rocks and the tombs.

¹⁴⁴ Greek fragment: For in many places scripture mentions the whole land of Judaea. (The play between 'land' and 'earth' in Origen's discussion of this verse is more tenable on the basis of the Greek text, where the same word means both 'earth' and 'land'.)

¹⁴⁵ See 1 Cor 3:18.

but a large number, rushed together 'over the land' of Judaea and Jerusalem to overwhelm the rays of the sun, and therefore 'the darkness was' very deep 'from the sixth hour until the ninth'.¹⁴⁶ And since we have made this point in this passage, we say that perhaps also the 'palpable darkness' in Egypt 'for three days' was of this kind, not occurring from an eclipse of the sun, but either because dark clouds rushed together into one, or because the air there at that time became denser over only the Egyptians—for 'on all the children of Israel', as Scripture testifies, 'there was light in all the places where they were staying'.¹⁴⁷ For it is also impossible with an eclipse of the sun which results from the concurrence of the moon with the sun for there to be darkness 'on three' successive 'days'. It is believed that there was some other cause for the darkness in Egypt since, in fact, the sun was not mentioned, or it was obscured, as it were, at that time. But the Scripture in Exodus says nothing other at this time than that 'Moses stretched out his hand to heaven, and there was darkness and fog and other things over all the land of Egypt for three days; and no one saw his brother, nor did anyone arise from his bed for three days'.¹⁴⁸

Now what I am saying about us not understanding every element of the earth by 'over all the land' of Judaea or Jerusalem, is the same as that argument that is written in the third book of the Kings, where Obadiah the steward of Ahab said to Elijah, 'What sin have I committed, that you give your servant into the hand of Ahab that he might kill me? Your God lives, if there is a nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent me to seek you, and I said, He is not there, and he burned the kingdom and its regions because he had not found you'.¹⁴⁹ For who is so stone-headed when he reads those words that he thinks that Ahab, the king of Israel sent into every nation of the world and into every kingdom of the circle of the earth seeking Elijah, and wherever it was said, Elijah is not here, he burned them? There is no doubt that those statements are a hyperbole, indicating that he had made a sufficient search in those nations that lay around Judaea, where he was able to search. We have also said in other places that since two general creatures were made on the sixth day, the first, animate beings, but then man, made 'in the image of God', it follows that that sixth day also is understood to have been divided into two species of creation, and in the sixth hour the Lord said, 'Let us make man in our image', and he made him at that time.¹⁵⁰ ***¹⁵¹ For this reason it was asserted that when that same man who was suspended on that identical sixth hour died for salvation, there was darkness 'from the sixth hour over all the

¹⁴⁶ Greek fragment: Either a dark cloud or masses of clouds intercepted the sun's rays reaching the land of Judaea.

¹⁴⁷ See Ex 10:21-3. Greek fragment: Or the air there, being sympathetically affected, was made thicker also itself for what happened... when 'he made war against the Egyptians because of them'.

¹⁴⁸ See Ex 10:22, 23.

¹⁴⁹ See 3 (1) Kgs 18:9, 10.

¹⁵⁰ See Gen 1:26.

¹⁵¹ Klostermann and Koetschau identify a gap here.

land until the ninth'.¹⁵² And just as when Moses stretches out his hand 'to heaven,' there was darkness on the Egyptians'¹⁵³ who were holding the servants of God in slavery, there was an image of the future darkness that was to grasp the Egyptians, likewise also when, at the sixth hour, Christ stretches out his hands to heaven on the cross over the people who had cried out, 'Take him away from the earth,' and 'Crucify him, crucify him',¹⁵⁴ there was darkness, and they were deprived of all light.

That darkness was an image of the future darkness that has engulfed the Jewish nation because they dared lay their hands on the true light.¹⁵⁵ Whence, from that time, that whole nation has been filled with darkness, just as the prophet says: 'Let their eyes be darkened that they might not see'.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, under Moses 'there was darkness and fog over all the land of Egypt for three days; and no one saw his brother, nor did anyone arise from his bed for three days; but on all the children of Israel there was light in all places where they were staying'.¹⁵⁷ But under Christ 'there was darkness over all the land' of Judaea for three hours, but there was light over all the rest of the earth, which gave light to the whole church of God in Christ everywhere.¹⁵⁸ And if 'there was darkness over all the land' of Judaea 'until the ninth hour', it is clear that the light has shown brightly on them anew, because 'when the multitude of the Gentiles has entered, then all Israel will be saved'.¹⁵⁹ And the fact that 'there was darkness over all the land' of Judaea for three hours shows that because of their sins they have been deprived of the light for three hours, the light of God the Father, the brightness of Christ,¹⁶⁰ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶¹

135 'And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying: Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But those who were standing there and heard said, He is calling for Elijah'.¹⁶²

We must investigate in a way worthy of the Lord what that loud voice of Christ was, whether it was loud in things that signify great mysteries, or loud in the physically perceptible sense of hearing a loud voice. But I think every voice of Christ, the Son of God, is loud, even if it happens to be gentle. Scripture testifies to this very fact especially in those passages in which he wishes to

¹⁵² Greek fragment: And since man came into existence on the sixth day, it is also likely that he fell on the sixth hour, and perhaps this is why he who suffered for the salvation of mankind was hanged on the sixth hour.

¹⁵³ See Ex 10:22.

¹⁵⁴ See Lk 23:18, 20.

¹⁵⁵ See Jn 1:9. Greek fragment: And it is likely that the darkness [is an image] of those being darkened who laid their hand on the light.

¹⁵⁶ Ps 68:24.

¹⁵⁷ Ex 10:22, 23.

¹⁵⁸ Greek fragment: For as there was darkness on the Egyptians and light on the children of Israel, so also now there is light on the church, but darkness on the Jews.

¹⁵⁹ See Rom 11:25, 26.

¹⁶⁰ See Heb 1:3.

¹⁶¹ Greek fragment: Three hours [indicates] the light of the Father, the radiance of Christ, the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶² Mt 27:46, 47.

encourage the hearer to go beyond that which most people can understand in the passages, and not remain with that (although there is some truth in the simple understanding) in order to be able to understand some things worthily because of the loud voice of the Lord. Because, therefore, he shows that, hidden in these words, there is something great which he cries out to God saying: 'Why have you forsaken me?', we must investigate what it means that Christ is forsaken by God, for it is not right to believe that he lies when he says, 'Why have you forsaken me?'

Some, with an appearance of reverence for Jesus and because they are unable to explain what it means that Christ is forsaken by God, give their opinion and say, What is said is indeed true, but it was said in humility. But when we see him who had been made 'in the form of God' descending from greatness of this magnitude and emptying himself because 'he assumed the form of a servant', and when we see in these things the will of him who handed him over to such things, we understand that so far as those things were concerned in which he was the form of the invisible God and the image in relation to the Father, he had been forsaken by the Father when 'he assumed the form of a servant'. And he had been forsaken for humanity, so that he might assume things that were of such magnitude and nature that he should come 'even to death, and death on a cross', which humanity considers to be the most shameful death.¹⁶³ For it was the furthest point of his abandonment when they crucified him and, in derision, placed over his head the words: 'This is Jesus, King of the Jews'. Other extreme points of his abandonment were the facts that he was crucified among thieves, and 'passing by, they blasphemed him shaking their heads against him', and the chief priests with the scribes said, 'He saved others, he cannot save himself'; and in addition, 'the thieves also reproached him' on the cross.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, you should be able to understand clearly what it means that he says, 'Why have you forsaken me?' by comparing that glory that he had with the Father with the shame that he despised and endured on the cross.¹⁶⁵ For his seat was 'like the sun in the sight of God, and like the moon perfect forever; and his witness in heaven was faithful'.¹⁶⁶ And after this, in relation to his words, 'Why have you forsaken me', he adds, 'But you have rejected, and diminished and defamed your Christ for nothing, you have overthrown the covenant of your servant, you have profaned his sanctuary on the earth', and the remaining words.¹⁶⁷

As long, indeed, as the sun shone, even though he was bearing so many great sufferings, he did not say, 'Why have you forsaken me?' But when he saw that there was darkness 'over all the land of Judaea until the ninth hour', he said in his loud voice, 'Why have you forsaken me', wishing to show that, by these events, 'you have forsaken me' willingly Father, and have delivered me emptied

¹⁶³ See Phil 2:6, 7, 8; 2 Cor 4:4.

¹⁶⁵ See Jn 17:5; Heb 12:2.

¹⁶⁴ See Mt 27:37, 39, 42, 44.

¹⁶⁶ Ps 88:37-8.

¹⁶⁷ Ps 88:39-40.

to such atrocities, so that the people who were once honoured with you might receive what they have dared against me, filling up 'the measure of' their 'fathers' and what they did in regard to the prophets,¹⁶⁸ so that they might be deprived of the light of your foreknowledge, and placed in darkness as if you, God, are now by no means present with them. But 'you have' also 'forsaken me' for the salvation of the Gentiles, so that 'the salvation of the Gentiles' might result from 'the failure' of Israel.¹⁶⁹ But what have those who have believed from the Gentiles done that is so good that I should purchase them with my 'precious blood' which has been poured forth on the earth for them from the wickedness which has held them?¹⁷⁰ And why 'have you turned your face away, and I have become troubled' so that I should say, 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death?'¹⁷¹ Or what will human beings for whom I suffer these things do that is so worthy that I should suffer these things for them? Just as the prophet already previously predicted this very thing, as if crying out to you and saying, 'What profit, Father has resulted for humanity 'in my blood when I go down to corruption? The dust will not acknowledge you will it, or announce your truth?'¹⁷² But perhaps also when he saw the sins of humanity for which he was suffering, he said, 'Why have you forsaken me, that I should become 'as him who gathers stalks at vintage time when there is no cluster of grapes to eat the firstlings.'¹⁷³ And I say these things 'because the God-fearing person has perished from the earth, and there is no one who sets things right among mankind.'¹⁷⁴ This is why you should not think that the Saviour has spoken these words in a human manner because of the injury that held him on the cross. If you take it in this way, you will not hear the loud voice in which those words were spoken, and you will not inquire about the worthy divine voice. Therefore, 'there was darkness indeed over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth'; but before the ninth was completed, the Lord 'cried out' about that time 'in a loud voice', saying what has been written, as if requesting that the sun might rise on the earth, dissolving, by its rising, the darkness of the three days in relation to what we passed on above.

136 'But some standing there and hearing him said, He is calling for Elijah, ***¹⁷⁵ but others said, Leave him; let us see if Elijah comes and frees him'.¹⁷⁶

If they had understood, as it were, that he called on God, they would also have been amazed that his prayer on the cross was greater than the prayer of Jonah when he prayed in the belly of the whale,¹⁷⁷ and they would have benefited so that even placed in extreme calamities they might not cease praying to God. I say that the prayer of Christ was greater than that of Jonah in the belly of the whale because of the substantial number of things shown from it, and because of the great consequence of his voluntary passion.

¹⁶⁸ See Mt 23:31, 32.

¹⁶⁹ See Rom 11:11.

¹⁷⁰ See 1 Pt 1:19.

¹⁷¹ Ps 29:8; Mt 26:38.

¹⁷² Ps 29:10.

¹⁷³ Mic 7:1.

¹⁷⁴ Mic 7:2.

¹⁷⁵ Klostermann says there is a gap here.

¹⁷⁶ Mt 27:47-9.

¹⁷⁷ See Jon 2:2-10.

137 'And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink'.¹⁷⁸

And thus he fulfilled in himself the prophecy that says of him: 'And they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink'.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, according to John, when Jesus had taken the vinegar with the gall, he said, 'It is finished'; that Scripture had predicted even this about me.¹⁸⁰ This is a delightful text that someone can use against those who have written or write malicious things against Christ, of whom Isaiah says, 'Woe to you who write malicious things; for they write malicious things when they write' (but I am speaking of those who send around some treatise or other, proclaiming 'iniquity against the height').¹⁸¹ And one may use this text when he sees those who glean arguments from various discourses written either by Gentiles or barbarians and construct a narrative as if a 'sponge' of some kind, filling it, not with the potable word, nor with the wine that cheers 'the heart of man' nor with the water 'of refreshment', but with some contrary, noxious, undrinkable intellectual 'vinegar'; and they put this 'sponge' on the 'reed' of their own Scripture and (so far as they can) they launch personal attacks on Jesus from such a drink.¹⁸² Some indeed give Jesus 'wine mixed with gall to drink',¹⁸³ because they do not want Jesus, the Son of God, to drink. Others offer him not wine, but 'vinegar'. Perhaps it is those, however many they are, who have a flavour related to church teaching but live wickedly, who give him 'wine mixed with gall to drink', but those who attribute philosophies alien to the truth to Christ as if it is he who says those things, fill a sponge with vinegar and put it 'on a reed' and give it to 'him' to drink. And there are those who also, as John writes, 'put to his mouth' 'vinegar and gall'.¹⁸⁴ And perhaps those who only smack of evil fill a 'sponge with vinegar' and put it on the 'reed' of their Scripture and give it to 'him' to drink, but those who have a bad taste of the dispensation of Christ and live wickedly take 'a sponge full of vinegar with gall and put it on hyssop' and offer it to 'his mouth' on a reed of Scripture. But he who does not want to drink his 'wine' because it is mixed with gall, even more so does not drink 'vinegar', or 'vinegar mixed with gall'.¹⁸⁵ For this reason we take wine free of all sour and bitter taste, wine that 'makes the heart of man glad' and the heart of the Son of God himself, wine that we receive from our Saviour Jesus (who is the 'true vine') and give to him and his disciples to drink, so that he may rightly say of us who give to him and his disciples to drink: 'I was thirsty and you gave me drink'.¹⁸⁶ Let us also take the 'water of rest' with which 'the good shepherd' nurtures the just so that those who are pastured by him may say: 'He reared us on the water of rest'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁸ Mt 27:48.

¹⁷⁹ Ps 68:22.

¹⁸⁰ See Jn 19:30. Vogt (1993) 368, n. 83 notes that Jesus does not mention 'gall' in John and surmises that Origen drew this from Ps 68:22.

¹⁸¹ Is 10:1; Ps 72:8.

¹⁸² See Ps 103:15; 22:2.

¹⁸³ Mt 27:34.

¹⁸⁴ Jn 19:29.

¹⁸⁵ See Mt 27:34, 48; Jn 19:29.

¹⁸⁶ See Ps 103:15; Jn 15:1; Mt 25:35.

¹⁸⁷ See Jn 10:11, 14; Ps 22:2.

138 'But Jesus again cried out with a loud voice and gave up the spirit'.¹⁸⁸

So far as Matthew is concerned, who says, 'again' Jesus cried out 'with a loud voice' and 'gave up the spirit' but does not show clearly what that loud utterance was which he cried out 'again', it was possible to say that he cried out 'again' that utterance which he cried out above saying, 'My God, my God'.¹⁸⁹ But because Luke writes clearly what utterance he cried out when he gave up the spirit, saying, 'Into your hands I entrust my spirit', it is possible also to understand that in this passage, when he gave up the spirit, it was that utterance which he 'again' cried out, 'Into your hands I entrust my spirit'.¹⁹⁰ If, therefore, to give up 'the spirit' or (as John writes) to deliver 'the spirit', was the same thing as dying, the words in this passage, 'he gave up the spirit', should be understood simply. But now, since the wise define death to be nothing other than the separation of the soul from the body, let us consider if perhaps it is not one thing simply to die, but it is another to cry out 'with a loud voice' and give up 'the spirit' (as Matthew relates in the present passage) or to entrust 'the spirit' 'into the hands' of God and give up 'the spirit' (according to what Luke says), or to bow the 'head' and give up 'the spirit' (as John relates it).¹⁹¹ Now to die is indeed the lot of all humanity, including those who are evil, because the souls of all humanity are separated from the body, even those of the unjust who cannot say what Christ said when he departed from his body. But to cry out with a loud voice and, in this way, give up 'the spirit', which means to entrust 'the spirit' 'into the hands of God', and in this way give up the spirit, or bow the 'head' and give up 'the spirit', is possible for no one but the saints. They, by their good works respecting God have provided for themselves, as also Christ did, so that when they exit the world they can confidently entrust or deliver their own spirit into the hands of God.

If, therefore, we have understood what it means to cry out a loud voice and in this way to give up 'the spirit', that is, to entrust it 'into the hands of God' (for this is how we explained it above when we set forth the exposition of the evangelist Luke), if we have understood what it means to bow 'the head' and give up 'the spirit', let us endeavour to guard our life so that in our departure we too can cry out with a loud voice and give up 'the spirit' in this manner. Or we can bow our 'head' and give up 'the spirit', just as Jesus did, who 'bowed his head' and departed, as if he were resting in that bosom of the Father above who could cherish and comfort it in his own bosom. But if you wish to hear what use it was for Christ to have cried out with a loud voice and to have given up 'the spirit' in this way, that is to have entrusted 'the spirit' 'into the hands' of the Lord and in this way to have given up or to have bowed 'his head' upon the

¹⁸⁸ Mt 27:50. ¹⁸⁹ Mt 27:46.

¹⁹⁰ Lk 23:46. Greek fragment: And the voice is this: 'Father, into your hands I hand over my spirit'.

¹⁹¹ See Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30.

bosom of the Father and to have given up 'the spirit', hear what the prophet says: For 'for this reason he did not leave his soul in Hades, nor grant' him 'to see corruption'.¹⁹² If, therefore, we too have conducted ourselves in such a way that we can entrust our spirits into the hands of God, or bow our head on the bosom of God and thus give up the spirit, without doubt he will neither leave our souls in Hades nor grant us to remain in corruption forever. But he who called that one back from Hades after the third day will also call us back at the appropriate time; and he who granted to that one that his flesh not see 'corruption' will grant to us, not indeed that our flesh not see 'corruption', but that it be freed from corruption at the appropriate time—that one, indeed, 'committed no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth',¹⁹³ but we will be just if we have sometimes at least desisted from sin.

But afterwards, because 'he again cried out with a loud voice' and said, 'Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit', and 'gave up the spirit', there were signs and prodigies over him testifying to his dignity as follows: 'And behold the veil of the temple was torn into two parts from top to bottom'.¹⁹⁴ As long as Jesus had not submitted to death for humanity, 'himself' ordained 'the expectation of the nations',¹⁹⁵ 'the veil of the temple' was concealing the secret parts of the temple.¹⁹⁶ For those parts had to be veiled until he alone who could reveal them should make them manifest to those wishing to see them, so that by the death of Jesus Christ who destroys the death of the believers, those who have been set free from death can look on those things which are within the veil. This is not the time to explain what those things were because they contain a great and difficult interpretation. It is more appropriate to explain those things in the third book of the Kings and in the second of Chronicles where it is written about the temple and those things that were placed within the veil.¹⁹⁷ Here, however, it is written only that 'the veil of the temple was torn into two parts from top to bottom'.

But someone who is attentive in understanding the Scriptures will investigate carefully and notice that there are two veils, one indeed within that veils the Holy of Holies, and another outside either of the tabernacle or the temple. These were types of the holy tabernacle that the Father prepared from the beginning. One of these veils of the temple 'was torn into two parts from top to bottom' when 'Jesus cried out with a loud voice and gave up the spirit', showing this to be a mystery (as I think), that in the passion of our Lord and Saviour 'the veil' which was without, 'was torn from top to bottom', so that once the veil has been torn 'from the top' (that is from the beginning of the world) 'to bottom' (that is to its end), the mysteries, which had reasonably been hidden up to the advent of Christ, were made public. And unless we were to know 'in

¹⁹² Ps 15:10.¹⁹³ 1 Pet 2:22.¹⁹⁴ Lk 23:46; Mt 27:51.¹⁹⁵ Gn 49:10.¹⁹⁶ Greek fragment: But up until Christ endured the death of the flesh, when he had not yet striven on behalf of our life, perhaps the veil was still spread out.¹⁹⁷ See 3 (1) Kg 6; 2 Chron 3.

part, each veil, that is, the one outside and the one within, had to be torn, but in fact even now all things are being made manifest to the beloved disciples of Christ who are still situated in the body. And now since we are being introduced to the knowledge of new things, therefore, the veil which was without, however, is torn 'from top to bottom', so that 'when that which is perfect should come' the remaining things will also be revealed.¹⁹⁸ At that time the second veil is removed so that we may also see in their true nature the things that have been hidden within the second veil: the true ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the true mercy-seat, and the repository of manna in the golden vessel,¹⁹⁹ and other things even greater than these made manifest, things indicated in the law of Moses when God said to him: 'You shall make all the things which were shown to you on the mountain according to the their pattern'.²⁰⁰

It is not strange, therefore, that 'the veil of the temple' that was hiding the inner mysteries 'was torn' so that the disciples of Christ (receiving spiritual eyes) might see those things which no one prior to Jesus, had seen. For only the chief priest alone saw those things which were within the second veil. And even Aaron and his descendants did not have the power or the worthiness to reveal what they saw to any other person. He alone who 'with an oath' was made chief priest 'forever according to the order of Melchizedek',²⁰¹ was able by the dispensation of his death to tear 'the veil of the temple into two parts from top to bottom' so that those things that were within might be seen by eyes capable of seeing such things.

139 'And the earth was shaken and rocks shattered and tombs were opened, and many bodies of sleeping saints arose, and after his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many'.²⁰²

'And the earth was shaken,' that is all flesh by the new word and new things related to the new covenant, and by the new song and all the new and heavenly beings coming upon the earth, just as the prophet says of this very thing in another place, 'All who saw them,' that is the disciples of Christ, 'were disturbed, and every person was afraid'.²⁰³ The Lord says the same thing through another prophet: 'Once more I will shake heaven and earth and sea and dry land'.²⁰⁴ And since we are making a few remarks about the earthquake, it is beneficial to speak again of the rocks which were shattered in the passion of our Lord and Saviour. These were a symbol (in my opinion) of the prophets, for the law and the prophets were made manifest in the advent of Christ. Therefore, 'when Moses is read the veil that had been placed on their heart is removed' for those who turn 'to the Lord', and 'the veil' that 'had been placed on the reading of the Old Testament is abolished in Christ'.²⁰⁵ Therefore they have now been opened, and 'the rocks' are shattered so that we may see the spiritual mysteries placed deep within them. And we think it is proper that the

¹⁹⁸ See 1 Cor 13:10.

¹⁹⁹ See Heb 9:4, 5.

²⁰⁰ Ex 25:40.

²⁰¹ See Heb 7:21, 17.

²⁰² Mt 27:51-3.

²⁰³ Ps 63:9, 10.

²⁰⁴ Hag 2:6.

²⁰⁵ See 2 Cor 3:16, 15, 14.

rocks shattered at that time were the prophets, first because 'Christ' is said to be a spiritual 'rock' and, on this account, all imitators of Christ are likewise said to be rocks,²⁰⁶ just as they are also said to be 'the light of the world' because their Lord himself is 'the light of the world', then because Peter also was called a rock by the Lord himself when it was said to him, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.'²⁰⁷ And this is shown especially because all against whom the 'gates of Hades' do not prevail and who have the work of the name rock (that is, apostles and prophets) in themselves are also rocks themselves, and are the foundations of those who are built upon them, in accordance with the apostle's words: 'having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.'²⁰⁸ And those, especially, are being built on the apostles and prophets who are of the unblemished church and esteem the apostles of Christ and do not reject the prophets but also search their writings carefully.

Now let us also speak of the tombs that were opened. But 'the hour is coming,' according to Christ's promise, 'that those who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God and will live.'²⁰⁹ 'The tombs are opened,' therefore, for those who hear 'the voice of the Son of God.' They had indeed been closed as long as the dead were in them, but they are 'opened' so that those who 'have arisen' may go out 'of the tombs,' not before the resurrection of the firstborn 'from the dead,'²¹⁰ but 'after' his 'resurrection.' And when they rise again, they indeed abandon the tombs and enter the 'holy city' and appear and are made manifest 'to many' who desire and can see 'the holy city' of God and 'the bodies of the saints' that have been raised to life again in it. For the bodies of sinful souls, that is souls dead to God, are said to be tombs. But when, by the grace of God, souls of this kind have been raised to faith, their bodies, which previously were 'tombs' of dead souls, are made bodies of saints and are seen to go out of themselves when they cease being 'tombs' of dead souls and begin to be bodies of saints. Remarkable things, therefore, happened because 'Jesus cried out with a loud voice and gave up the spirit,'²¹¹ and these same great things continue to happen daily. For when is the 'veil of the temple' not torn 'from top to bottom' and from beginning to end to reveal to the saints the things held within it. And when does 'the earth,' which prior to the death of Christ was immovable, not shake and tremble for those who are worthy of salvation? And when are 'the rocks,' as we pointed out, not split? In the same way also 'tombs are' always 'opened' and 'many bodies (of saints' but indeed sleeping) 'arise' and come out

²⁰⁶ Greek fragment: And since 'Christ' also is 'a rock,' and his imitators, the apostles and prophets, are called rocks....

²⁰⁷ See 1 Cor 10:4; Matt 5:14; Jn 8:12; 9:5; Matt 16:18.

²⁰⁸ Eph 2:20. Greek fragment: 'Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.'

²⁰⁹ Jn 5:25.

²¹⁰ See Col 1:1, 8.

²¹¹ Mt 27:50.

'of the tombs' (nevertheless 'after' his 'resurrection' 'who died for us'²¹²) and follow him who arose and walk with him 'in newness of life.'²¹³ So too those who are worthy of having citizenship in heaven, saying, 'But our citizenship is in heaven,'²¹⁴ enter 'the holy city' every time and let their light shine 'before men', and appear 'to many' who see and understand their 'good works' and, therefore, glorify 'their Father who is in heaven.'²¹⁵

But we ought also to say and understand of those people that every letter indeed of the Gospel, as a letter, gives life to the Gospel scribes (if I may call them that), but the spirit, which goes beyond the nature of letters, by its inspired movements illuminates those more for whom the Gospel is not veiled,²¹⁶ for they do all things so that they might perceive what mysteries occur in their soul through the resurrection of Christ. For the person who believes in the Scriptures experiences a certain benefit, but Scripture is filled with a greater knowledge for the person who sees that 'the veil' of Scripture is torn 'from top to bottom' and sees the things that are within, And blessed is he also for whom 'the earth' and all earthly things are shaken (for they too have been shaken by Christ): his feet will not be shaken nor will he say, 'My feet were almost shaken.'²¹⁷ And how much more blessed is he who sees the shattered rocks with the eyes of his soul, than those who saw those things happen physically at that time? And how much more than those who saw those literal physical prodigies will someone be profited if, after he sees 'tombs opened' and 'many bodies of sleeping saints' arising and going out 'of the tombs' 'after the resurrection' of the body of Christ, he is totally removed from tombs, enters the city of God, and is made a member of it? But I think this is sufficient to separate this person who enters 'the holy city' and 'many' see clearly that he is in it, from that person who believes the literal story and does not ascend from simple faith to higher mysteries.

140 'And when the centurion and those with him who were watching Jesus saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, they were very frightened and said, Truly he was the Son of God.'²¹⁸

Mark writes as follows: 'The centurion who was standing there, seeing that he cried out and died, said: Truly this man was the Son of God'; and Luke writes: 'When the centurion saw what happened, he glorified God saying, Truly this man was just.'²¹⁹ According to Mark the centurion did not marvel because 'the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom', or because the other signs occurred to which Matthew refers (that is, because 'the earth was shaken', 'rocks were shattered', or 'tombs were opened'²²⁰). Therefore, it is worth seeing what happened afterwards in addition to what Mark has written,

²¹² See Rom 5:8. I have followed the reading of B and omitted the phrase 'in eis' which Klostermann prints in this parenthesis.

²¹³ See Rom 6:4.

²¹⁴ Phil 3:20.

²¹⁵ See Mt 5:16.

²¹⁶ See 2 Cor 4:3.

²¹⁷ Ps 72:2.

²¹⁸ Mt 27:54.

²¹⁹ Mk 15:39; Lk 23:47.

²²⁰ See Mt 27:51, 52.

that the centurion should marvel and say: 'Truly this man was the Son of God.'²²¹ Now see if we can say, in one way at least that he marvelled at the things Jesus said to God with a cry and a magnitude of emotions which he was capable of understanding. ***²²² Admiring him, he marvelled and said: 'Truly this man was the Son of God'. But we can say in another way that perhaps Pilate, wishing to yield to all the people who said: 'Crucify, crucify him',²²³ and fearing an uprising of the whole people, did not order that Jesus be beaten under his arm pits, which was a Roman custom for those who are crucified, which they do sometimes who condemn those caught in greater crimes (since those who are not beaten after the nailing endure greater torment, sometimes all night and still the whole day after that, but they live with extreme pain). Jesus, therefore, since he had not been beaten and was expected to suffer greater torments hanging on the cross a long time, prayed to the Father and was heard and immediately was received as he cried out to the Father or, as one who had 'authority to lay down' his own 'life', he laid it down when he wished.²²⁴ The centurion was amazed at this sign that occurred and said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God'. For it was a miracle that he was received after three hours, who perhaps in two days would be subdued on the cross according to what usually happened to those who were hung but not beaten. It appears to have been because of the kindness God and the merit of his prayer rather than the violence of the cross that he breathed his last. What Mark says when 'Joseph' went in 'before Pilate' and asked for 'the body of Jesus' indicates this same thing. For he says, that 'Pilate wondered if he was already dead; and when he had heard from the centurion, he gave his body to Joseph'.²²⁵ For if the normal practice of the Romans about crucifixions and beatings had been observed in the case of Christ, how would Pilate have wondered if he were already dead? Take note, therefore, if the fact that he was already dead and that 'Pilate called for the centurion and asked if he was already dead' may not indicate a new miracle.²²⁶ Note further, if Matthew too does not indicate that the execution of Christ was of this nature when he says, 'The centurion and those who were with him watching Jesus'. Why were they watching him unless so that he would suffer more hanging on the cross a long time, neither killed nor taken down? Nevertheless, 'the centurion', according to Matthew, not only said of Jesus, 'Truly he was the Son of God', but also feared him when the shaking of the earth frightened him. But perhaps he also knew from experience about earthquakes which occur in the nations and was stunned when he saw that there was an earthquake in this place too.

And observe that in Mark, where the centurion is reported to have seen no miracle, he says that the man Jesus was Son of God;²²⁷ but he who was stunned by the ripping of the veil or by the earthquake does not say that he was a man, but 'the Son of God'. Moreover, the statement in Luke's treatise where he writes,

²²¹ Mk 15:39.²²² Koetschau thought there was a lacuna here.²²³ Lk 23:21.²²⁴ See Ps 117:5; Jn 10:18.²²⁵ Mk 15:43, 44.²²⁶ Mk 15:44.²²⁷ See Mk 15:39.

'Truly this man was just,' is also in harmony with our opinion that we stated about Mark's writing. Nothing further is added to Luke's statement except a remark about the veil: 'The centurion,' it says, 'seeing the things that occurred, glorified God saying, Truly this man was just.'²²⁸ But John also makes clear that something such happened at the time of Christ's condemnation, and that Pilate did not order the observation of the normal practice that the body of Christ should be beaten, when he writes that, 'They asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be removed.'²²⁹ But why would it have been necessary to ask and make entreaties about this if it had been done in the customary way? The Jews, therefore, felt pity after the cruel condemnation of those who, so far as their estimation was concerned, were alive in excruciating pain. 'And they broke the legs of the first man,' and likewise of the second, but in respect to Jesus, there was no need for their intercessions or the entreaties that they offered to Pilate, because 'when they came to Jesus they did not break his legs since he was already dead.'²³⁰ Or perhaps the Jews did not do this for the sake of mercy, but primarily because of the Sabbath, 'so that the bodies not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. For that Sabbath was a great day.'²³¹ We have discussed these things because of what is written: 'The centurion and those who were watching Jesus with him, seeing the earthquake and whatever was happening were afraid' and the rest. For it is likely that they saw how the veil of the temple had been 'torn to the bottom' and the other events that disclose the mystery of those things which we related above, and 'they were very frightened,' for the addition of 'very' indicates this.

But consider if this narrative does not admit a moral explanation such as this: There are some who receive Christ and serve him. If they should sometime see the veil being torn as we related and rocks being shattered as we explained it, and tombs being opened in accordance with our explanation and the bodies 'of dead saints' going out 'of the tombs' and entering 'the holy city' (that is the church), they are incited to fear of God and bear witness to him that he who has suffered such things is the Son of God. And it will be no surprise if someone shall have confessed the Son of God to be the Word and Wisdom and Truth, and whatever else the Son of God is said to be. And he is praiseworthy who is not disturbed by those things which appear to have affected him in a human manner, and acknowledges that he was the Son of God.

141 'And there were many women there watching from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob²³² and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.'²³³

²²⁸ Lk 23:47.

²²⁹ Jn 19:31.

²³⁰ See Jn 19:32, 33.

²³¹ Jn 19:31.

²³² This name is usually rendered 'James' in English translations, but Origen draws a connection between the name here and Jacob in the Old Testament later in this section.

²³³ Mt 27:55, 56.

They relate that Isaiah has prophesied about these women saying, 'You women who come to a spectacle, come: For it is not a people that has wisdom.'²³⁴ For he designates those who were looking at Jesus 'from afar' 'women'; he calls them to the Word that they should leave that foolish and forsaken people and come to the new covenant. I think 'the women' are blessed who are edified to blessedness by the sight of the Word and by the death of the body of Jesus, for everything that is in Christ, if it is seen truly, makes the one who beholds it blessed. They are observing, therefore, the dying of the body of Jesus and the way in which he entrusted 'his spirit' to the Father with prayers.²³⁵ These, first of all, have 'followed from Galilee' and, if I may speak daringly (drawing on the authority of what Scripture teaches) they have 'followed' 'from Galilee' 'of the Gentiles',²³⁶ not straight or constant but with a certain circumlocution (for this is the meaning of the word Galilee, that is, a rolling or whirling about), which they have left behind and 'followed Jesus', not indifferently, but doing what he commanded them, and they pleased him for they were 'ministering' to him as they followed.²³⁷ Now every soul, sharing in some distribution of graces and in the Lord himself, performs a ministry to Jesus like the ministries of the angels of whom it is written that 'the angels approached and were ministering to him.'²³⁸

There were, therefore, many women looking at Jesus at that time, and the principal ones are named, as if they were 'looking' more attentively, 'ministering' to a greater extent, and 'following' in a more excellent way. There was 'Mary Magdalene', harmonious in a high degree with the interpretation of the name of her fatherland, which is called Magdala (but is interpreted to mean, 'that place is greatly praised').²³⁹ And this 'Mary Magdalene' was of the place greatly praised for no other reason than that she had followed 'Jesus', ministered 'to him', and looked on the mystery of his passion. And, 'Mary the mother of Jacob and Joseph' was also among the principal women, or (as Mark says²⁴⁰) 'the mother of Jacob the less and Joseph', related to the name of the patriarch Jacob,²⁴¹ the supplanter of his brother, and Joseph, at whose birth his mother said, 'May the Lord add to me another son.'²⁴² This woman, therefore, follows

²³⁴ Is 27:11.

²³⁵ See Lk 23:46.

²³⁶ See Mt 4:15.

²³⁷ Greek fragment: And now the soul which has left rolling and unstable Galilee and follows the Word and does the commandments sees the death of the body of Jesus in a true way and the manner of his delivering his spirit to the Father with prayer....

²³⁸ See 1 Cor 12:4; Mt 4:11.

²³⁹ Greek fragment: While there were many other women there, these are named as the principal ones who saw in a greater way and served, and followed more excellently; Mary from the place greatly praised (for Magdala is interpreted to mean 'a place greatly praised').

²⁴⁰ Mk 15:40.

²⁴¹ Greek fragment: And the mother of the one named after the patriarch, the one who supplanted his brother, and over whom his mother said when he was born, 'May God add another son to me.'

²⁴² Gn 30:24.

the Lord, ministers to him, and looks on the dispensation of his passion because she was the 'mother' of another faithful disciple, not of anyone great (as was the patriarch Jacob), but less, and of the other 'Joseph'. And the 'mother of the sons of Zebedee' was also among the women. Perhaps it was because she was someone standing firm in the ministry of thunder because of her faith and holy life and because she followed the Lord and ministered to him and was an observer of all the things done around him that the sons of Zebedee are called 'sons of thunder'.²⁴³ For her sons were John and James; therefore John heard the words of the seven thunders concerning which he received the command that he should not write, as though they were too excellent for all writing.²⁴⁴ But if one must have an opinion and also give a name to the mother 'of the sons of Zebedee', I say that she was Salome, which means peace-maker.²⁴⁵ My opinion is based on the fact that in Matthew and Mark I see three principal women mentioned about whom our present discussion is concerned. Our present evangelist presents two of these to be 'Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jacob', but the third is said to be mother 'of the sons of Zebedee'. In Mark, however, that third woman is called 'Salome'. And, according to Mark, 'the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee' 'went up into Jerusalem' with Christ.²⁴⁶ For that is the goal of those who left Galilee 'of the Gentiles'²⁴⁷ and followed Jesus, that they not only go up into Jerusalem, but that they also go up into it with Jesus.²⁴⁸ For that they are said to have gone up 'at the same time' with Christ indicates this.²⁴⁹

142 'And when it was late, a certain rich man from Arimathia named Joseph came. He himself was also a disciple of Jesus; he went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered the body to be handed over.'²⁵⁰

The man who asked for 'the body' of the Lord from Pilate was not some nondescript person, but a man rich in laudable riches. And because he had been appointed as a Decurion, he bore the mystery of the name of Christ in truth (which is the meaning of ten²⁵¹), therefore, based on his great distinction, he asked Pilate for 'the body of Jesus' and did not allow him to hang on the cross. Therefore, he is praised by the evangelists as 'a just and good man'²⁵² 'and' he was 'a disciple of Jesus' and yielded, perhaps, the fruits of his discipleship among the masses, just as he also did in the body of Christ because 'he was expecting the kingdom of God' just as Jesus had taught.²⁵³

²⁴³ See Mk 3:17. Greek fragment: And the mother of the sons of thunder is mentioned.

²⁴⁴ See Rev 10:3, 4. ²⁴⁵ Greek fragment: Salome, which means peace.

²⁴⁶ See Mk 15:40, 41. ²⁴⁷ Mt 4:15.

²⁴⁸ Greek fragment: And the goal of those who left Galilee of the Gentiles and follow Jesus is not only to go up into Jerusalem, but also with him.

²⁴⁹ See Mk 15:41. ²⁵⁰ Mt 27:57, 58.

²⁵¹ The older meaning of a decurion was the leader of a tenth part of a group, whether political or military. Later it was the title given to all members of local ruling bodies in the Roman empire. Mk 15:43 and Lk 23:50 both designate Joseph as 'a member of the council'.

²⁵² Lk 23:50.

²⁵³ Mk 15:43.

143 'And when Joseph had received the body he wrapped it in clean linen and placed him in his own new tomb that he had carved in the rock, and rolled a large stone to the mouth of the tomb and departed.'²⁵⁴

'He wrapped it in clean linen and placed it in a new tomb' where there was no one dead, preserving the body of Jesus until his extraordinary resurrection. Now I think that that linen possessed a greater cleanliness after the body of Christ was wrapped in it than before, for even when the body of Jesus is dead, it purifies whatever it touches as the body of Jesus. It made that new tomb that had been carved 'in the rock' even newer. And do not think that it was written by accident and just happened to be said that 'he wrapped' the body 'in clean linen and placed it in a new tomb', and that that tomb had been carved 'in the rock', a clean tomb that was made cleaner by the body of Jesus than it was before the body of Jesus was placed in it. But you will ask if there are people who possess nothing more than the body of Jesus, who are indeed new and carved 'in the rock', and are his clean tomb, and therefore are saved. And accordingly, besides those, there are also others who possess the living Jesus. Some of the latter possess the living Jesus even prior to his passion, but others possess him resurrected from the dead; and some possess him as he appeared to many not having 'form or beauty',²⁵⁵ but others possess him transformed into glory,²⁵⁶ and still others see him ascending, and hope to be caught up with him in a cloud that they may 'always' be kept with him.²⁵⁷

Therefore, Matthew has written that the tomb was new and has set forth clearly that it had been carved 'in the rock'. And Luke and John have made clear that it was new from any dead body. One of them said: 'In which no one had yet been placed'; and John: 'In which no one had yet been placed'.²⁵⁸ To be sure, it is indicated to those who consider this saying carefully that if no one had ever been placed there, then afterwards they were; for what does it say: 'In which no one had yet been placed'. We say, therefore, (unless perhaps we ought to understand this passage simply), that he who said: 'We have been buried with Christ by baptism', and we have been resurrected with him, has himself, after Christ, along with all who have been buried with Christ in baptism, been buried with Christ in a new tomb carved spiritually in a rock that they may rise with him from the new tomb, the firstborn 'from the dead' holding 'the primacy in all things'.²⁵⁹

And Joseph did not 'roll' many stones 'to the mouth of the tomb' but one that was 'large', larger than the power of those who plotted against him could be, but not than the power of the angel who descended 'from heaven' and

²⁵⁴ Mt 27:59, 60.

²⁵⁵ See Is 53:2.

²⁵⁶ See Mt 17:2.

²⁵⁷ See Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17.

²⁵⁸ Lk 23:53; Jn 19:41. The two statements are identical in Latin; there is a very minor difference in wording in the Greek text that Origen would have been using that does not affect the meaning.

²⁵⁹ See Rom 6:4; Col 1:1, 8.

rolled 'the stone' away and sat 'on it', because all things that are around the body of Jesus are clean and new, and they are not simply large, they are all 'very' large.²⁶⁰

144 'But Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the sepulchre.'²⁶¹

After these things, the love of the two Marys, the one from Magdala and the mother of Jacob and Joseph, brought them together at the new tomb because the body of Jesus was there. And take note that above it was those two Marys 'and the mother of the sons of Zebedee', whom we take to be Salome, who 'were looking from afar at' the marvellous things that were occurring during the passion of Christ, and at his body hanging on the cross. But here they have not continued to be three, for the mother of the sons of Zebedee is not recorded to sit opposite the sepulchre at the same time with Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jacob and Joseph. For perhaps the mother of the sons of Zebedee had been able to arrive as far as that [scene related above], but these, as if they were greater in love, were not even absent from these events which occurred afterwards.

145 'And on the next day, which is after the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered to Pilate saying: Sir, we remember that that seducer said while he was still alive: After the third day, I will arise. Order, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, so that his disciples may not come and steal him and say to the people, He has risen from the dead, and the last error will be worse than the first. And Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know how. And they departed and secured the sepulchre, sealing the stone with the guards.'²⁶²

It falls under the argument to ask 'the chief priests' who came 'to Pilate' to explain what they said. Speak up, Priests, When Jesus said, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days',²⁶³ what do you think his intended meaning was? Did he mean the dissolution and resurrection of 'his own body',²⁶⁴ or the destruction and restoration of the temple? For if you understood that he said those things about his own resurrection, on what basis did you give testimony against him and say, 'This man said: I am able to destroy this temple and rebuild it in three days'?²⁶⁵ But if you truly understood him to mean that temple about which you presented your testimony, how is it that now you know that he meant 'after three days' he will arise from the dead? See how your impiety refutes itself with your own words. By these words they reject that testimony of theirs, because they truly understood him to say those things about the resurrection of his own 'body', and knowing this they changed his words to mean the destruction and restoration of that temple that has no sense perception.

²⁶⁰ See Mt 28:2; Mk 16:4.

²⁶¹ Mt 27:61.

²⁶² Mt 27:62-6.

²⁶³ Jn 2:19.

²⁶⁴ See Jn 2:21.

²⁶⁵ Mt 26:61.

But I ask in addition, What do you say, Priests? Did he really say to people: 'After three days I will arise,'²⁶⁶ and secretly command his disciples that 'they steal him by night and say' after three days that 'he arose from the dead?' This in itself is incredible, that after he taught so many moral lessons among all people and demonstrated such mighty works and so many of them everywhere in all Judaea, he should deceive his own disciples with words so that even they would disapprove of him who commands those things. They would, therefore, by no means do what he was commanding, especially because of the danger that would threaten them from the people if they were to admit that they held him to be teacher and Christ who a little previously had been crucified.²⁶⁷ But if it is incredible that he would have said this, see if it does not follow that just as he performed miracles, just as he predicted that his Gospel would be preached 'in all the world,' just as he said 'you will stand before governors and kings,' and just as he said, 'Jerusalem will be destroyed by an army,' so too, his words, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days,' was a prediction of his own resurrection.²⁶⁸ For this reason 'the priests and Pharisees' spoke 'to Pilate' on the basis of their prejudice 'saying, that seducer said while he was still alive that after three days I will arise.'

But there is more. Notice that 'some of the guards come into the city and report,' not to others, but to 'the chief priests' themselves, everything that had happened,' so that their impiety is confirmed to be inexcusable in every respect.²⁶⁹ And those men were so wretched that they did not acquiesce to such great proofs that they should accept that Jesus was the Christ, but even after all these things they maliciously contrived because of the hardness of their heart. Because just as Pharaoh's heart was hardened during all the great miracles that occurred in Egypt,²⁷⁰ so also they were hardened so that 'they gathered with the elders and took counsel to give money' to the greedy that they should say, 'that his disciples came at night and stole him while we were asleep.'²⁷¹ And those who read in the law, 'You shall not bear false testimony,'²⁷² even allured others to false testimony, paying out a lot of money that the soldiers would bear false testimony (submitting themselves to danger for the sake of money if the body of Jesus had been stolen). But much more importantly, they would appease their commander and would persuade him (with as much money as it took for the commander to be appeased, or also even with entreaties).²⁷³ They wished to rescue those who would bear false testimony against themselves from danger by saying, contrary to military discipline, that they had been in deep sleep at that time, so that the disciples had dared to come along with many at the same time (confident that the soldiers were soundly asleep), and in this way they stole the body of Jesus.

²⁶⁶ See Mk 8:31. ²⁶⁷ See Jn 13:13, 14.

²⁶⁸ See Mt 26:13; Mk 13:9; Lk 21:24, 20; Jn 2:19. ²⁶⁹ Mt 28:11.

²⁷⁰ See Rom 9:18; Ex 7:3. ²⁷¹ See Mt 28:12, 13.

²⁷² Ex 20:16. ²⁷³ See Mt 28:12-14.

All these things were carried out by contrary powers working against the teaching of Christ, thinking that they could remove the providence of God and faith in the resurrection of the Lord from human life. And just as the excessive hardness of Pharaoh was not softened by the many miracles performed by Moses, or more to the point, so the hardness of their heart was not persuaded by the signs and miracles that occurred, but they did not even believe the reporting guards 'who came into the city and reported everything that had happened'. And it was said 'to Pharaoh': 'For this reason I raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared in all the earth', but the magnanimity of God supported these people as 'vessels of wrath prepared for destruction', so that 'salvation' might come about 'among the Gentiles'.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ See Rom 9:17, 22; 11:11.

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